

New Zealand Young Women's Methodist  
Bible Class Movement

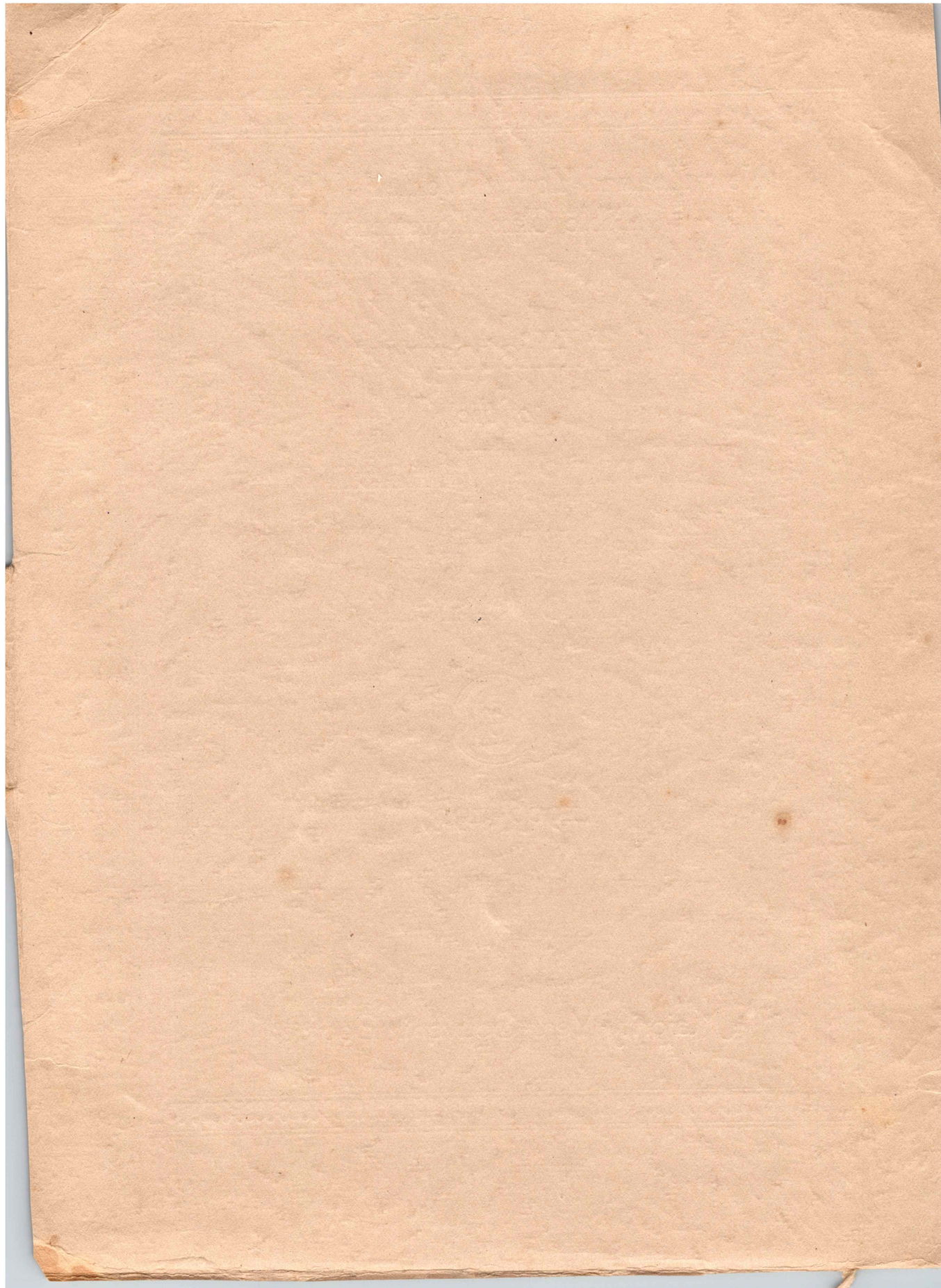
History  
*of the*  
Young Women's  
Methodist Bible Class  
Movement



1906 - 1927

Majority Year Souvenir Booklet













"MAJORITY YEAR" LEADERS' CONFERENCE, DEC. 28-31, 1926.—DELEGATES.

Back row—Misses B. Armstrong, D. Lynn, E. Miller, E. Sewell, B. Hetherington, V. Heyward, E. Bycroft, H. Ward, Rev. E. P. Blamires, Misses G. Burley, D. Childs, I. Jones, D. French, M. Fairweather, E. Quigley, Mrs. Steptoe, Mrs. Gilling, Misses E. Hall, D. Fairweather, Mrs. H. Cook, Misses L. Hodder, A. Firth, Mrs. Whyte, Misses K. Dennis, K. Baird, F. Nixon, B. Hancox, J. Dixon.



HISTORY  
*of the*  
YOUNG WOMEN'S  
METHODIST BIBLE CLASS  
MOVEMENT  
1906-1927



PRINTED BY WHITCOMBE & TOMBS LIMITED  
CHRISTCHURCH, N.Z.

1927



DEDICATION.

---

To

THE FOUNDERS OF OUR MOVEMENT, WHO BUILT SO MUCH  
MORE WORTHILY THAN THEY KNEW.



## Editorial

---

At Larnach's Castle, in 1922, the idea of collecting material for a history of our Movement was first put forward. As usual, in a case of this kind, the difficulty was to find a capable person with sufficient time to devote to the work; one after another was approached, but for various good reasons had to refuse. Late last year the New Zealand Executive, in planning the programme for Majority year, urged the possibility of compiling the history, and the Unions were approached with the request that each should supply the record of its own district. They were good enough to consent, and although, in every case it meant additional burdens on already busy people, each compiler has voiced her joy and interest in the task. So many different hands at work has meant a certain amount of unavoidable repetition, for which the indulgence of the public is craved.

The chapter on the New Zealand Movement owes much to notes written by Miss Cunninghame, who has known the inner working of our institution from its inception. Our thanks are also due to Messrs. Ralph and Gell, pioneers in Bible Class work in the Wellington District, for light on pre-union days; to Dr. Ranston, President of Conference, for his pastoral letter; to the Rev. E. P. Blamires for his chapter on co-ordination; and to our Travelling Secretaries for their survey of that important branch of our work.

It has indeed been good for us all to search these records of the past, to enter into the spirit of the founders, to dream their dreams, to see the building which, thank God, so many of them are spared to see, and to become one with the life force which animates it to-day. May we of this generation worthily carry on what they so greatly began!

OLIVE M. COOK.

"If there be good in that I wrought,  
Thy hand compelled it, Master, Thine;  
Where I have failed to meet Thy thought  
I know, through Thee, the blame is mine.

One stone the more swings to her place  
In that dread temple of Thy worth—  
It is enough that through Thy grace  
I saw nought common on Thy earth.

Take not that vision from my ken;  
O, whatsoe'er may spoil or speed,  
Help me to need no aid from men  
That I may help such men as need!"

(Kipling).



## MAJORITY YEAR

### Officers of the Movement

FROM 1906 TO 1927.

PLACE.	DATE.	PRESIDENT.	SECRETARY.	TREASURER.
Canterbury	1906-7	Miss Cunninghame	Miss O. Collier	Miss Fitzer
„	1907-8	Mrs. H. L. Blamires	Sister Mabel	Miss Baxter
Auckland	1908-9	Mrs. Armitage	Miss Harvey	Miss Gunson
			Miss Walton	Miss Thornton
Wellington	1909-12	Sister Annie (Mrs. E. O. Blamires)	Miss Williams	Miss McDonald Miss Binnie
Wanganui	1912-3	Sister Jean	Miss Dalziel	Miss Jamieson
Auckland	1913-5	Mrs. Armitage	Miss Champtaloup	Miss Cowley
			Miss Gunson	Miss Adlington
Wellington	1915-6	Mrs. Boys	Miss Hill	Miss Redstone
Canterbury	1916-8	Mrs. W. J. Williams	Sister E. Walton	Miss Cowie
Hawera	1918-20	Sister Nellie	Miss Hitchins	Miss Squire
Auckland	1920-1	Mrs. Armitage	Miss Harvey	
Dunedin	1921-2	Sister Emily	Miss G. Gibbs	Miss N. Adams
Wellington	1922-5	Miss D. L. Murch (Miss K. Boxall, deputy)	Miss Calvert	Miss Armstrong
		Miss H. H. Ward	Mrs. Steptoe	Miss Fathers
Canterbury	1926-7	Mrs. Harvey Cook	Miss Fairweather	Miss Miles



*SOUVENIR BOOKLET*

**New Zealand Executive Officers**

FOR MAJORITY YEAR, 1927.

---

**Hon. President:**

THE PRESIDENT OF CONFERENCE.

**President:**

MRS. HARVEY COOK, M.A.

**Vice-Presidents:**

MRS. WHYTE, MRS. WILLIAMS, MRS. GILLING, MRS. PICKERING,  
MISS A. FIRTH, MISS E. HALL, M.A., MISS R. ROSEVEAR.

**Secretary:**

MISS D. FAIRWEATHER.

**Recording Secretary:**

MISS N. BUXTON.

**Treasurer:**

MISS T. N. MILES.

**Committee of Three:**

MRS. CRESPIN, SISTER MABEL MORLEY, MISS M. RAINE, L.A.B.

**Y.P. Representatives:**

MRS. W. J. WILLIAMS, MISS M. RAINE.

**Travelling Secretary:**

MISS LORNA HODDER.

**"Methodist Times" Editress:**

MISS ELLA FOWLER, M.A.

**"Link" Editress:**

MISS RHODA WARD, M.A.



## MAJORITY YEAR

### Majority Year Programme

---

1. Leaders' Conference Retreat, December 30th, 1927.
2. Special Day of Intercession last Sunday in February, in all churches.
3. Twenty-one Easter Camps, with the same study, "The Kingdom of God." and Souvenir Programme with definite fixtures for each camp.
4. Movement Sunday incorporated with Young People's Day, on 3rd Sunday in May.
5. Uniform Thanksgiving Services and Country Members' Rally in the last week-end in August.
6. Church Membership Campaign, Membership Sunday to be Y.P. day in May.
7. Leadership Training Campaign, to ensure as many as possible participating.
8. Publication of History of the Movement.
9. Calendar Leaflet for each Bible Class girl.



#### THE TWENTY-ONE EASTER CAMPS WILL BE HELD IN THE FOLLOWING PLACES:—

**Auckland**—Dargaville, Paerata (Senior), Paerata (Junior).

**South Auckland**—Cambridge, Thames.

**Wanganui**—Lepperton, Feilding, Palmerston N.

**Hawke's Bay**—Havelock N.

**Wellington**—Eastern Hutt, Carterton, Levin, Nelson, Blenheim.

**Canterbury**—Reefton, Oxford, Governor's Bay, Timaru, Willowby.

**Otago**—Mosgiel, Bluff.

## SOUVENIR BOOKLET

Methodist Theological College,

Auckland, March 1st, 1927.

MY DEAR YOUNG WOMEN,—

On this twenty-first birthday, on behalf of the N.Z. Methodist Church, I offer you heartiest congratulations. We are very proud of you, and are sure to be prouder still in the years to come.

We live in post-war days, which are dangerously critical for the Church; but if your course is set in the right direction there can be no fear as to the future. Times of crisis are always big times for people to live in who really believe in Jesus Christ. And you do that. "Crisis" really spells "opportunity" to live Christians. And you are alive.

We know you are alive because, while you are mightily glad of what Methodism has been, you have made up your minds that the days to be are to be greater still. Your faces are towards the rising sun. A revival is long overdue; but you are determined so to obey spiritual laws that one must come. May your cheery optimism shame the deadly quiescence of some of the older people! Methodism is anything but a spent force, and with your help she will, on all fronts, assume an offensive which will carry the war into the devil's own country.

Let me remind you of a few vital truths:—Remember that Christianity is a religion of redemption. Do not be afraid of an ethical Gospel—a gospel of high and noble living—but above all keep the cross central in your minds. Forget this in your classes and you will have neither a vital missionary spirit nor permanent successes. Jesus is whole worlds more than a greater Socrates, He is a Saviour from sin. Much as the world needs a Teacher, it needs a Redeemer more.

Remember, too, that the Risen Lord dwells within your Church. She is a supernatural creation, a Divine institution. Grasp this fact and you will never despair, even if your class be set in the most unlikely district. And while you must not become intolerantly denominationalistic and gloss over our faults, I want you to deprecate all talk which suggests that religious facilities are better and more numerous outside Methodism than within.

Live near to Christ and so win that contagious and superheated joy which characterised our early Church. Don't be suspicious of fervid enthusiasms. A cold religion is a timid one. You will never do anything great unless you feel deeply. You need have no fear of the dangers associated with an emotional religion if at the same time you cultivate the intellectual apprehension of Christianity, and also allow no emotion to pass away without its being condensed into some act or word of noble living. Feel warmly, think deeply, act beautifully—a great tread.

Keep your religion pure, and untainted with worldliness. You cannot permanently hold your classes if you compromise the Christian standard. Don't make religion easy. Sound out a call to a life of high renunciation. Take up the cross and carry it; do more than talk about it. Set yourself to self-denying adventure in the name of Christ. The record of your twenty-one years as a Union is full of such adventuring. Give us still more of it.



## MAJORITY YEAR

Let each young woman seek some definite sphere of spiritual activity. Ask yourself: "What can I do so that my own local class and church may make a real imprint for Christ upon the neighbouring people?" Begin at once to do it; for you will get an answer. Do not forget that the finest way of training for wider service is to do well and thoroughly the work which lies nearest at hand in your own local church.

I am,

Your Brother,

HARRY RANSTON.

---

Twenty-one years ago the Bible Classes associated and formed a Union to realise a larger fellowship and to extend their work by an organisation of their own—a natural impulse to self-expression. The pioneers wrought better than they knew. They were perhaps unconscious that in so many parts of the world simultaneously youth was assuming new responsibilities, and young womanhood particularly was entering a new era of freedom and opportunity. The Easter Conventions in the early years were scenes of contagious enthusiasm.

From Convention to Camp was a forward step. Instead of being billeted in private homes, and holding sessions in a church, the camp was instituted with all the value of happy community life. Frequently the Young Men's and Young Women's camps were adjacent to one and the same city, and some of the combined gatherings, when central churches were thronged with eager young life, were mightily inspirational.

Another improvement was effected when, instead of listening to a succession of addresses, organised Bible study circles were instituted similar to those of the Student Christian Movement.

Again, advance was made from Business Session in camp to a separate Leaders' Conference, with representatives elected from all District Unions.

Also the New Zealand "Union" became a Dominion "Movement," the new name signifying a new consciousness of the potentiality of the developing life and organisation.

The revised form of the constitution, when compared with the original one, accentuates this realisation that the Movement has a great mission to fulfil.

These are but a few among many signs of the spiritual vitality of the Bible Class Movement, which has so impressed the leaders of the New Zealand Methodist Church that they frequently refer to it as the most promising feature in the life of the church to-day.

The genius of the movement is that youth with lofty ideals has an opportunity within the church for self-expression.

The basic principles are Self-government and Co-ordination, and the progress of the movement depends upon a right balance of these being pre-

## SOUVENIR BOOKLET

served. Self-government develops initiative and an amazing power to achieve. Co-ordination is equally vital. It means that the movement operates within the church, and in close co-operation with the Young People's Department of the church. Thus church loyalty is not subverted, but promoted.

The movement is strategic for solving many church problems. It not only stops the outward drift of young life, but, positively, it trains to church membership and service, Bible study and prayer, healthy sport and happy social life, a sense of stewardship, and a right motive in vocation.

The prospect of this movement is aboundingly hopeful. The chief problem to-day is the supply of a devoted and trained leadership. This problem is now being earnestly attacked, and training classes have been inaugurated.

The Hand of God is upon the movement, and because of this the future of the church is assured, and the life of a young nation must be enriched.

E. P. BLAMIRES.

---

Laugh and be merry, remember, better the world with a song,  
Better the world with a blow in the teeth of a wrong.  
Laugh for the time is brief, a thread the length of a span.  
Laugh and be proud to belong to the old proud pageant of man.

Laugh and be merry, remember in olden time,  
God made Heaven and Earth for joy he took in a rhyme,  
Made them and filled them full with the strong red wine of His mirth.  
The splendid joy of the stars: the joy of the earth.

So we must laugh and drink from the deep blue cup of the sky,  
Join the jubilant song of the great stars sweeping by,  
Laugh and battle and work, and drink of the wine outpoured  
In the dear green earth, the sign of the joy of the Lord.

Laugh and be merry together, like brothers akin,  
Guesting awhile in the rooms of a beautiful inn,  
Glad till the dancing stops, and the lilt of the music ends.  
Laugh till the game is played, and be you merry, my friends.

(Masefield.)

---

Flower in the crannied wall,  
I pick you out of the crannies,  
I hold you here, root and all, in my hand,  
Little flower,—but *if* I could understand  
What you are, root and all, and all in all,  
I should know what God and man is.

(Tennyson).



## MAJORITY YEAR

# Historic Programme OF First Convention OF Young Women's Methodist Bible Classes

WELLINGTON, APRIL 13TH TO 16TH, 1906.

### GOOD FRIDAY—

Welcome to Visitors, Wesley Church Class Room.

10 a.m.—Devotional meeting; Election of Officers for the N.Z.Y.W.M.B.C. Union.

2.30 p.m.—Meeting (2 papers).

“The Objects and Advantages of a N.Z.Y.W.M.B.C.”

MISS JEFF, of Christchurch.

“The Sisterhood of Woman.”

MISS HAYES (Leader of Trinity Church Class).

6 p.m.—Tea in Schoolroom; Young Men's and Young Women's B.C. Union.

7.30 p.m.—Devotional Meeting; Combined Unions and Public.

### SATURDAY—

10 to 11 a.m.—Committee meeting at Wesley School.

11 a.m.—Cricket Match, Christchurch Union v. Wellington Union.

Afternoon—Ramble.

### SUNDAY—

10 a.m.—Prayer Meeting at each Church.

2.30 p.m.—Meeting in Wesley Class Room (3 papers).

“Faith.”—MISS McCONNELL, Christchurch.

“Christ Risen.”—MISS WILLIAMS, Wellington.

“Character Building.”—MISS PORTER, Christchurch.

### MONDAY—

9.30 a.m.—Outing.

12.30—Dinner at Young Men's Camp.

Afternoon—Garden Party.

Evening—Farewell.

## **New Zealand Young Women's Methodist Bible Class Movement**

---

This year, 1927, we celebrate the twenty-first anniversary of the formation of the New Zealand Union. It has been difficult to obtain any details of Bible Class life before that time, but many classes were in existence, especially in the larger centres. These were generally regarded as the senior Sunday School class, and worked from the Sunday School syllabus. They were divided into committees for sick-visiting, hunting up new members, collecting books for the library, supplying flowers for the church, etc. It depended almost entirely on the leader how long the girls stayed in school; and it was the great loss of older scholars which first turned the attention of interested workers towards modern Bible Class methods.

Several years at least before there was an attempt made towards an organised Bible Class Union, there was in Wellington a happy intercourse existing between the young people of various denominations in the realm of sport. Three friends, Mr. Troupe, leader of St. John's Presbyterian Young Men's class; Mr. (afterwards Rev.) R. S. Gray, of Vivian Street Baptist Church; and Mr. J. Gell, of Taranaki Street Methodist, used to meet to talk over the various phases and problems of their work, and gaining much thereby, they concluded that the young folks in their charge would also benefit by knowing more of each other.

At this time each class had football and cricket teams, and it was no difficult matter to arrange a match. The first contest took place in Newtown Park in the winter of 1895, and those who did not play supported their favourite team to the best of their lung capacity. The young women were as interested as the men, and figure in snapshots as the most ardent aids and emergencies. The match, and the summer cricket event became annual fixtures, and were so successful in their main purpose that a joint social gathering was next suggested. The first, held in Taranaki Street schoolroom, was so enjoyable that others followed at St. John's and Vivian Street, and a real bond of unity and comradeship was forged. This experiment, and others like it in the various centres, no doubt contributed much towards the eagerness displayed for union within the separate denominations.

Mr. Ralph, another Wellingtonian, was appointed Sunday School superintendent of Manners Street School in 1865, and having his work very much at heart, noted with grief the annual lament of the Sunday School Secretary concerning the constant drift of the young people out of the Church. When Mr. Gell reorganised the senior boys' class along the lines of the modern Bible class, Mr. Ralph was quick to back him up and do the same for the senior girls. The two leaders put their heads together to produce a fitting syllabus, one that would rouse the dormant powers of thought of the young folks. Combined meetings were occasionally arranged, and for the first time the four-



## MAJORITY YEAR

square ideal was enunciated. The girls formed cricket clubs like their brothers, whom they required, in the first matches, to play their bat upside down; but not for long! Rowing became a favourite pastime, and many trials of strength took place at picnics. Instead of quietly drifting away from a church which ignored their young needs, the youths and maidens thronged the Bible Classes. One precious syllabus still extant gives the roll number of Taranaki Street Class as 68 for 1896, and a range of subjects for study that our present day syllabus would find it hard to beat.

In Wanganui, about the same time, the Trinity Young Men's Institute was formed, mostly for physical and social work, and justified its existence to such an extent that the membership reached the fine total of 400. Sports teams were eager for new worlds to conquer, and learning what their fellow Methodists were doing in Wellington, they invited them to a tournament at Wanganui during Easter, 1899. The visit was returned the following year, and so on for several years. Of course the young women of the churches concerned were enthusiastic backers of the respective teams, and could be depended at any time to provide sustenance for the inner man.

The pioneers who first arranged the sports meetings in Wellington district concluded that if a little Union and intercourse were good more would be better; and the various classes coming into being in and around the city decided to form themselves into a Union for the purpose of developing the spiritual side of their work.

The Canterbury Union became an accomplished fact in November, 1904. Dunedin, whose Bible Classes had been flourishing for several years, had banded together in June, 1905, but as yet there was no intercourse between the different nurslings. Girls going from one district to another were often lost to the Bible classes for want of a common organisation, and that fact induced the Wellington leader, who was on a business trip to Canterbury, to try to meet the leaders in that district. Miss Cunninghame, of Durham Street, Mrs. Green, of East Belt, and Mrs. Peacock and Mrs. Lockwood, of Addington, were most enthusiastic over the idea of a New Zealand Union, and had indeed been planning in that very direction; and armed with authority from the southern district, Mr. Ralph called together the members of his Union on his return. These energetic folk set to work with a will to make a dream come true; invitations were extended to the existing Unions and individual unaffiliated classes; and the first united Young Women's Bible Class Convention sat in Wesley Church, Wellington at Easter, 1906. Delegates were present from Masterton, Kuripuni, Napier, Palmerston North, Wanganui, Blenheim, Nelson, Christchurch, and Wellington. For the duration of the Conference Miss Hayes, of the Newtown class was elected president, Miss Palmer secretary, and Miss Williams treasurer. Naturally the first subject for discussion was the desirability or otherwise of forming a New Zealand Union. Pros and cons having been faithfully weighed, the following resolution was moved by Mr. Ralph, to whom as father of our Movement be lasting honour and thanks—"That we now form a New Zealand Union, and that the name be 'The N.Z. Methodist Young Women's Bible Class Union.'" The seconder on this historic occasion was Miss Gardiner, of Nelson, and the proposal was carried with acclamation.



## SOUVENIR BOOKLET

The New Zealand Union being now an accomplished fact, it was necessary to plan for it a workable constitution and the following resolutions were carried:—

**Officers.**—President, Secretary, Treasurer, and all leaders of senior girls' classes in the district in which the President is elected.

**Membership.**—All members of Methodist Senior Young Women's Classes are eligible. Honorary Members—Young women interested in but not belonging to Bible Classes, may join. A ticket of membership shall be prepared for use of intending members.

**Colours.**—The colours of the Union shall be white, navy, and gold.

**Badge.**—A badge in the colours of the Union shall be made, the design to be left in the hands of Christchurch members.

**Meetings.**—Meetings shall be held annually, preferably in different towns each year, and the officers for the year shall be elected at this meeting.

**Next Conference.**—The next annual meeting shall be held in Christchurch during Easter, 1907.

Officers for the year 1906-1907 were elected as follows:—President, Miss Cunningham; Secretary, Miss O. Collier; Treasurer, Miss Fitzer.

Financial matters were disposed of very simply. Wellington Union being the hostess, generously bore the expense of launching the larger movement, and Canterbury offered to pay all dues during its year of office.

**Sports.**—The first common meeting place in Wellington had been the sports ground, and "Father" Ralph, having proved its value, saw that it was not neglected. A cricket match between Christchurch and Wellington was one of the features of the Convention, and on this occasion the latter team, profiting by previous encounters with its brothers, was the winner. A scratch hockey match was also arranged for the delegates from other centres. It was so good after a business session to test one's physical prowess that plans were made enthusiastically for meetings next Easter, and challenges given and accepted in hockey, cricket, and archery. This spirit of friendliness and fellowship was not bound at home, but overflowed with goodwill to the young men's Convention, which was camped in the city. A great body of the youth and manhood of the church, with its attendant ministering spirits, marched to Taranaki Street schoolroom for tea on Good Friday evening, where a hilarious hour was spent. The present was so wonderful, the future so full of promise, that one's tongue could not keep silence. Still more wonderful was the meeting which followed. The church was full of campers and their friends, who were addressed by Rev. H. L. Blamires, organizing secretary of the Young People's Forward Movement. (A little later this became the Young Men's Bible Class Union.) He spoke of the aim of the Movement, which strove to give opportunity to the young people of the church to fulfil Christ's demand of service—unselfish service of the needs of others. The Young Women's President, Miss Hayes (afterwards our beloved Sister Nellie), followed along the same lines; and then the Rev. Fairclough (now at rest) conducted a very solemn Sacramental service, the largest which had been held in Taranaki Street Church.



## MAJORITY YEAR

Back in conference once more routine business was concluded, and time spent on papers submitted by Miss Jeff, on "The object and advantages of a New Zealand Union"; by Miss Hayes, on "The Sisterhood of Women"; Miss McConnell, on "Faith"; Miss Porter, on "Character Building"; and Miss Williams, on "The Resurrection." At the concluding session Miss Hayes gave as her parting message, "Hold fast to the faith, ever remembering Christ has risen." The thanks of the whole delegation were expressed most heartily to Mr. Ralph for his great help and untiring zeal in promoting the formation of the New Zealand Union.

Thus was inaugurated, with many prayers and much hope, an undertaking which its founders designed to raise the standards of Bible Class work generally, to cater for the whole round nature of every girl in its care, and to bring appreciably nearer the day of that Kingdom which received its baptism nearly two thousand Easters ago.

---

All lovely things I love,  
Whether of sky or sea;  
Earth and the fruit thereof,  
And the starry company  
That wander through Heaven above,  
Singing unceasingly.

I love all sweet-voiced things:  
The coil of falling streams  
The honeyed murmurings  
Of bees in their noontide dreams,  
And the brush of Night's great wings,  
That a sweeter silence seems.

I love all silent thought  
Prisoned in cadenced sound;  
And many a jewel bought  
From hearted caves profound:  
And yet in all I've sought  
Something I have not found.

(Student.)

---

. . . More things are wrought by prayer  
Than this world dreams of. Wherefore let thy voice  
Rise like a fountain for me night and day.  
For what are men better than sheep or goats  
That nourish a blind life within the brain,  
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer  
Both for themselves and those who call them friend.

(Tennyson.)

## Canterbury's First Year of Office, 1906-7

---

**Constitution.**—The Constitution which had been hastily outlined in Wellington had now to be drawn up in proper form, and in such terms as would best represent the aims and objects of the Union, and meet the requirements not only of that day but also of the years to come. Motto, aim, government, membership, finance, had all to be most carefully considered, and one who was there still remembers the very late and prolonged meeting at which our constitution was finally drafted. Rev. H. L. Blamires (long may that name be associated with our work), organiser of the Young Men's Forward Movement, was our sympathetic guide and friend, and later chose the Motto, "The Utmost for the Highest," which still serves as our beacon light. That the work of this early executive was well done is evidenced by the fact that the Constitution represented our aim, and adequately served the Union for sixteen years of growth and expansion, and many more of us can remember the hectic session in 1923 when the new draft was adopted. This remains the same in essence but has had to meet the demands of new departments and changing phases of the work.

That year of beginnings made most strenuous demands on the time and powers of the executive department; indeed, in reading the record of correspondence, one can only compare it with the crowded hour of glorious life enjoyed by present day Union secretaries! Most of the Bible Classes in the Dominion were approached with the claims and benefits of affiliation, copies of the Constitution were posted to all leaders, and paragraphs of information sent to the *Outlook* (now *Methodist Times*). All this entailed hours of work, especially as it was much more difficult to get typing done then than now. The already established Wellington and Dunedin Unions co-operated splendidly, getting in touch with their nearest classes, and the response from most was immediate and enthusiastic.

**Badge.**—The badge design was also the occasion of tremendous thought, and the one selected, a silver bar on which were enamelled in blue, white and gold, the letters B.C.U., was much admired. The first two hundred quickly sold out, and before the year was out another two hundred were ordered. The wearing of this badge has helped many a girl away from home to find among strangers a welcome and real friends.

Some years later a new design replaced the old—a lettered blue shield, which had again to make way for a blue button with B.C.M.U. in gold. The present badge, the letters B.C. intertwined in blue and gold, is the same design (but differing in colour) as used by all the other Bible Class Unions in New Zealand, with the exception of the Anglican Girls. One Lord, one aim, one badge, and *one Union?* Well, why not? It is not the young folks who are keeping the churches apart to-day.

**Affiliation Forms** much like those in use to-day were broadcast over the land and returned, some after many days, others more promptly to the busy secretaries. In several instances interdenominational classes, having Bible study as one of their activities, sought permission to link up, and were gladly welcomed.



## MAJORITY YEAR

**Cards of Removal** were printed for the benefit of members moving from one district to another, and these were supplemented by letters written to the secretary of the Union to which the girls would next be attached.

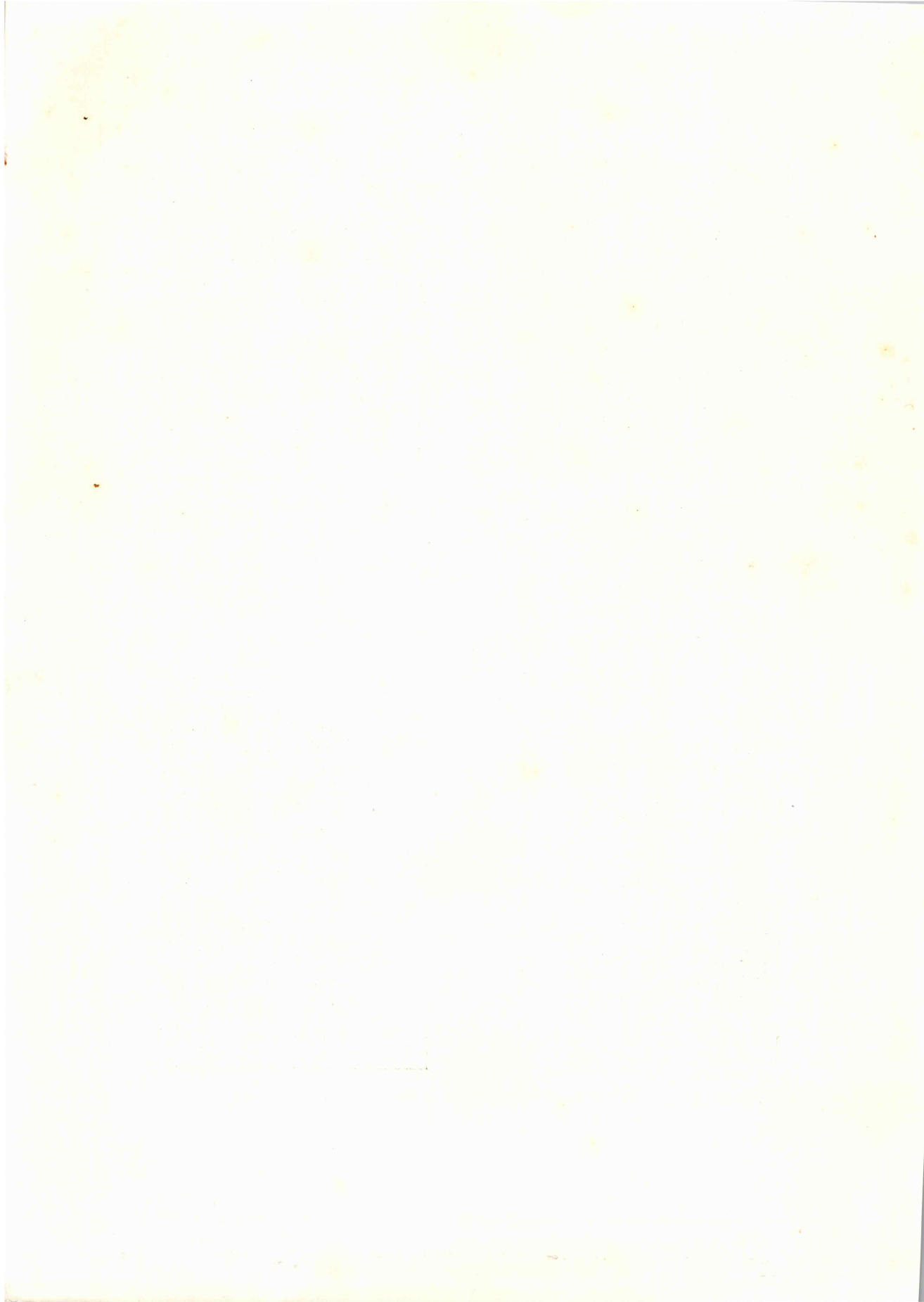
**Finance.**—There was considerable expense involved in the printing undertaken and the stationery used, and money to meet obligations became a pressing need. Miss A. Hardy, with a number of assistants, volunteered to get up a Floral Concert with flowers, dresses, and songs to represent the seasons. With the willing co-operation of many interested friends (quite a number from the Boys' Union) the preparations were made for the fateful evening, which proved a huge success. Fifty pounds clear profit was made,—enough to end all worry over money matters during Canterbury's year of office.

**Second Conference.**—1906-1907 was Exhibition year in Christchurch, a time when a big influx of visitors into the city could be looked for. Some anxiety was expressed about housing the delegates, but the spirit of union and prayer was so vital that all difficulties were solved as soon as mentioned. The Presbyterians, Baptists, and Methodist Young Men's Bible Class Unions were also holding their camps in Christchurch at this time. As train after train disgorged its passengers the station looked like the land of perennial youth: a youth radiating cheer-germs, divided into sections by colourful ribbon badges, united in the spirit of expectation. Methodist young women were sorted out and claimed by their respective hostesses, who promised to present their guests ready for business the next morning.

The Convention, 200 strong, and representing 32 classes, opened in Durham Street Church at 10.30 on Good Friday morning, March 29th, 1907. Friends and sponsors joined with the delegates in a devotional meeting, which set the standard for the sessions to follow. The president, Miss Cunningham, addressed the afternoon gathering in a manner thoroughly characteristic of her foundation work of the year just past; deep spiritual insight and understanding was combined with a respect for practical commonsense. The first motion of the Convention was one of heartfelt regret that Mr. and Mrs. Ralph were prevented by bereavement from attending.

During the year it had been suggested that we, as a Union, take up for our special branch of service home mission work among Maori girls and women, and if found practicable, send out and support a Sister to work among them. The idea was enthusiastically taken up by our members; correspondence ensued between Revs. Hammond and Gittos, the Home Mission Board, and the New Zealand Executive as to the possibility; Conference favoured the proposed scheme, and Rev. H. L. Blamires prepared material to answer all possible questions. When the business came before the convention it was discussed from every angle, and then the following resolution was put and carried unanimously:—"That our New Zealand Union equip, send out, and support a deaconess to the Maoris provided that the Home Mission Board would likewise maintain one, it not being deemed advisable for one Sister to work alone; both Sisters to be under the control of the Home Mission Board."

This resolution had special significance in that it heralded the first appointment in the church of a worker among Maori women and children; and the results were so satisfactory that the policy was adopted and earnestly pushed by the Home Mission Department.







MISS CUNNINGHAME  
First New Zealand President and  
First Canterbury President



MRS. ARMITAGE  
Three times New Zealand President  
and Auckland President for six years



SISTER MABEL MORLEY  
Twice Canterbury President  
Twice New Zealand Executive Member



MRS. W. J. WILLIAMS  
Otago's First President  
and New Zealand President, 1916-1918



## SOUVENIR BOOKLET

Financial ways and means were next considered with the result that each district union undertook to raise annually not less than £25.

The missionary interest evinced at this early stage of our history has never flagged. Individual classes are supporting orphans and teachers, and contributing generously to circuit funds, besides being faithful to their first love.

The session was concluded by the arrival of 200 young men hungry for tea and a little feminine society. The fears of the officers that stiffness and formality might mar the cheeriness of the gathering were soon dissipated by the bubble of fun and laughter that ensued, and these same *responsible* people discovered that girls had no monopoly in powers of tongue!

Long before the time of evening service St. Paul's Church—except for the space reserved for our delegates—was thronged with representatives of Baptist and Presbyterian Bible classes and their friends. It was the largest gathering of young people that had yet been held in the Cathedral city! What an inspiration it must have given to the President, Rev. Thos. Tait, M.A., B.D.—that sea of faces, eager, enthusiastic, anxious to learn the way of highest living. Sister Olive (now Mrs. W. J. Williams), Mrs. Bannerman Kaye (President of the Y.W. Presbyterian B.C.U.), Mr. Adams, of Dunedin (now Judge Adams), and Rev. H. L. Blamires spoke in their turn, each obviously stirred to give of his or her best to the expectant crowds.

The **Constitution** drafted at the first convention needed a little revision. The official list was extended to include

1. Honorary president, the president of Conference.
2. On the executive, the superintendent of the circuit in which the executive was sitting, and one local representative of each of the District Unions.

Membership was also offered to Junior classes.

Palmerston North extended a cordial invitation to the unions to hold the next convention in their town. As they could not undertake the executive work the following Christchurch officers were elected for the ensuing year:—

President, Mrs. H. L. Blamires; Secretary, Sister Mabel; Assistant Secretary, Miss L. Anderson; Treasurer, Miss Baxter.

Canterbury's labour of love was continued during another full year, the year that saw the inauguration of the work among the Maori women and children under Sister Nellie (Miss Hayes of Newtown class), and Sister Julia Benjamin, recently returned from New Guinea. The government of the day recognised the possibilities, and offered Sister Nellie training in sick nursing in the Cambridge sanatorium, the matron of which, in Sister Nellie's words, was "a queen among women," and gave her every facility to acquire the necessary knowledge. The same paternal government also supplied a case of medicine and other equipment free.

While Sister did her part in mastering the Maori language, and something of their customs and etiquette, the girls collected the promised money, Otago being first with £38 7s. 6d.

The **Palmerston North** Convention was memorable in several ways. Through overwork in the cause of the young folk of the church, Rev. H. L.



## MAJORITY YEAR

Blamires was forced to resign, and the Rev. A. B. Chappell reported on the rapid extension of the work of his predecessor and himself, the needs of weak and isolated classes, and the means necessary for their assistance. The immediate outcome was the promise of district unions to appoint correspondents for country classes to report central doings to them, and advise them as to ways and means of improving their classes.

While convention was in session classes in Auckland and Timaru held camps for those who were not able to go further, and thus started a policy which has proved one of the finest means of growth of the four-fold union spirit.

On Easter Monday afternoon Rev. Beecroft, President of Conference, conducted an induction service, when Sisters Nellie and Julia were dedicated to the task of spreading the teachings of Christ among the Maori women and children of Taranaki district. At the close Mrs. Beggs, the president-elect, on behalf of the girls of the New Zealand union, presented each with a silver key "to open the hearts of the Maoris," and promised the loving thoughts and prayers of all in the difficult times ahead.

Auckland's invitation for Easter, 1909, was accepted, and the following officers elected to carry on there:—

President, Mrs. Beggs (non-resident); Acting President, Mrs. Armitage; Secretary, Miss Hervey; Treasurer, Miss Gunson.

These early conventions are important in that they laid the foundation of the edifice we know as "The New Zealand Young Women's Methodist Bible Class Movement," an imposing title and (we think) a no less imposing monument to the work of those pioneers of yesterday. It is not proposed to treat other annual gatherings in such detail, but to mention the main features of change and progress which make for the adornment of our structure to-day.

It was soon found that continuity was necessary if some of the work done one year was not to be lost in the change of executive the next, and in 1909 it was decreed that instead of the locale being changed each year it should, if advisable, remain the same for not more than three years. The next year comes the first hint of real co-operation between Sunday School and Bible classes in the appointing of three Bible Class members to the Sunday School Advisory Board. Wanganui Union became a separate entity at this convention.

**Politics.**—Sister Nellie, in telling the story of her work each year, had stressed the evils arising from the lack of registration of vital statistics among the native peoples. A petition for circulation among Bible Class girls of all denominations was drawn up praying the Government to make compulsory the registration of births, marriages, and deaths. With this backing, and the able work of the New Zealand Executive, under Mrs. Blamires, parliament introduced and passed the required Act in 1913, thus stopping one big channel of evil to the Maori Race.

**At the 1912 convention** there went through a resolution which recalls a state of affairs many of us had forgotten ever existed. We are now such a united body of Methodists that it is hard to realise that fifteen years ago we were divided into "Wesleyans" and "Prims."! The motion referred to reads:—"That the New Zealand Executive write to all Primitive Methodist Young



## *SOUVENIR BOOKLET*

Women's Bible Classes inviting them to affiliate when the union of the churches is accomplished."

**Wanganui**, so recently constituted a Union, was quick to offer hospitality for the next Convention. Easter, 1912, had seen a gathering of 300 girls at some of the meetings, and at Wanganui 250 answered the roll call. The fact that the home and near Unions had a preponderance of delegates whose votes might outweigh those of more distant centres gave rise to the following resolution—"That each Union appoint representatives, one for every ten members, to vote on all matters that call for voting, thus equalising the strength of Unions."

Delegates were still housed by Bible Class friends, but each year certain costs of entertainment, printing, etc., were borne by the hostess Union. Several districts realised the undemocratic nature of this proceeding and wished it changed, hence Wanganui's remit was carried unanimously—"That in order to defray part of the cost of entertainment a levy of 2/6 per senior and 1/- per junior be made on delegates attending the annual convention." In the following resolutions other matters were also put on a more business-like footing.

1. That the Maori Deaconess fund be allocated in proportion to the membership of each Union.

2. That members of Bible Classes who teach in the Sunday School be eligible for appointment as voting delegates to convention.

3. That no names be accepted as delegates to convention except those sent through Union Secretaries.

4. That the £25 now being raised yearly for Foreign Mission work be sent this year to New Guinea to assist the work of Mr. and Mrs. Gilmour.

And that good old perennial, the Bible-in-schools question, came first before the notice of convention, whose interest was solicited to make public the nature of the proposed Bill.

The 1914 Convention met in Auckland city, 330 strong. Sister Nellie, ever a welcome guest, told of the good results already accruing from the compulsory registration of Maori births and deaths, and of the counteracting influence of Christianity against Tohungaism. Letters from New Guinea told of the progress of the work of the Mission Station and the native teachers supported by the Unions.

The Convention pledged itself to the support of the platform of the Bible-in-schools League in its campaign for a Referendum Bill; and also to the cause of National Prohibition and Local No License, urging all members of voting age to exercise that vote.

The **tenth Convention** met in Dunedin in 1915, under the shadow of the war. Its numbers were about half of the usual assemblage, but that fact did not detract from the quality of the meetings. The opening address was on "Deaconess' Work," by Sister Grace Crump, who so enlisted the sympathy of her hearers that a thanksgiving offering of £6 10s. was given to the work, and girls were asked to consider it as a possible avenue of service. The Chicago Training School for Deaconesses, with whom Sister Grace was in correspondence, offered a two-year course of training for two girls, free, and delegates were urged to make this known and secure acceptances.



## MAJORITY YEAR

Another innovation of the Convention, and one which was to prove of great practical value, was a session devoted to informal discussion of class aims and needs by leaders and secretaries only. These folk, working at the core of things, felt the necessity for getting together and learning from each others' mistakes and successes.

The **eleventh annual Convention** was memorable in many ways. There was present a delegate who, from experience gained in other directions, had a newer and wider vision to open up before willing eyes. Miss Jessie Abernethy, whose name is enshrined in the hearts of many Bible Class workers, and to whose memory tribute is paid elsewhere, spoke on "Great Expectations," and later proceeded to show how some of them could be realised. Private study might, with benefit to all, be worked upon more systematic lines, and as a practical demonstration, she arranged study circles, meeting each day, and taking a set group of studies. This method is a commonplace to us now, and as we enjoy the interchange of ideas and the talking over our difficulties in congenial groups, we are apt to forget those to whom we owe this advance.

Wellington and Otago each sent notices of motion preferring Summer camps to Easter Conventions, but it remained with Miss Abernethy to suggest a solution acceptable to all, and to throw out a suggestion startling in the extreme at the time, but which has since become gloriously possible. The resolution carried read as follows:—"That this convention consider the possibility of extending convention into a week's Conference, either at Christmas or Easter; that the experiment of small local camps be tried at times convenient in different localities; and that the possibility of *employing an organising secretary* be seriously considered.

This Convention was also memorable in that it saw the close of our first decade of Maori work and the retirement of Sister Nellie from that loved sphere of labour. She was *petite* and delicate-looking, and her appearance when she was appointed caused many wise heads to be shaken in fear and doubt. She herself had neither of these hindrances to fight, but gave herself in full trust to Him who can "Enable." With the one break of a brief holiday with relatives in South Africa, she gave herself to meet the needs of the Maoris, served them in love till her physical strength was done, and then made way for others to carry on. This is not a missionary record, or many pages might be filled with the doings of Sister Nellie, Sister Julia, Sister Huia, and other helpers, who represented us on the field. With grateful hearts we acknowledge the "beauty of their ordered lives" and the great inspiration they were to our infant Movement. Mrs. Boys, New Zealand President for 1916, voiced the feelings of Bible Class girls throughout the Dominion when she presented Sister Nellie, on their behalf, with a wristlet watch and a purse of sovereigns in affectionate acknowledgment and appreciation of a life lived in the service of others.

Previous to 1918 the delegates to Dominion Convention had always been billeted with local hostesses, whose giving had been on the most generous scale. This year marked a big departure from the accustomed policy in that visitors—100 strong—camped in an empty hotel at Sumner. The opening talk on "Camp Ideals," given by Miss Abernethy, disclosed a road over hitherto untrodden country, and also formed a standard which succeeding campers have been glad to aim at.



## SOUVENIR BOOKLET

Bible Study groups were again a feature much enjoyed by the campers, as were also the devotional addresses given by the Revs. A. Liversedge and E. P. Blamires,—the latter now in such happy association with us through the "Youth Department" of the Church. Sister Edith Goodall, a valued Bible Class worker was dedicated to the work of Deaconess to the Maoris in the place of Sister Nellie. She had already served beyond the pioneering stage, and had a thrilling tale to tell of adventures and opportunities in the Hokianga district.

Many delegates were keen to repeat the experience of Dominion Camp as soon as possible, but much weighing of pros and cons resulted in a resolution favouring biennial New Zealand camps for seniors, and annual district camps specially catering for juniors, providing that dates did not clash with the Dominion fixture. Otago's motion—"That the matter of the appointment of a Travelling Secretary be proceeded with without delay," was carried.

At the conclusion of the Convention a Faculty meeting was held to discuss thoroughly all camp arrangements, in order that mistakes made might be avoided in future, and suggestions offered for new developments, so that the best possible camp might be evolved. We are still looking for that "best possible," aren't we? And when we've found it we'll use it for a stepping stone for something better still!

Campers at **Wanganui in 1920** met under happier conditions than for some years previously. Peace had come bringing its own problems but freeing one and all from the worst anxiety, and the sickness of hope deferred. Sister Nellie's opening remarks surveyed the results of the war years and the changing conditions on our work. The actual figures of membership were less, one lamentable cause being the lack of capable leadership, a need which various reports had stressed for years; but the adoption of new methods and the deepening of spiritual life which came with added knowledge and understanding of the world about us proved that we were more than marking time. Each district report had hopeful and invigorating features. Auckland especially was commended for its establishment of the Whakatu Club, designed to meet the all-round needs of juniors.

The Faculty meeting was made use of very early in Conference. Members resolved themselves into committees to prepare and arrange the business for presentation in the open session. A wire from the Men's Camp at Avoca asked that a special camp at Auckland for 1921 be considered with a view to combined Conference on Centenary year preparations and Co-ordination policy. Delegates unanimously acceded to the request when Auckland offered to undertake the work of preparation; and it was also decided to hold next year the customary biennial camp!

At every convention a session had been consecrated to the discussion of missions, home and foreign, and a speaker obtained from one or other field. This camp was no exception. Mrs. Ballantyne, a missionary from Papua, spoke on Practical Christianity and the work of the women missionaries on that island; a series of recommendations for the promotion of real interest in missions was drawn up in committee and adopted in Conference; a representative of the New Zealand Union was appointed to sit on the Home Mission Board in Auckland; and a delegation from the Women's Missionary Auxiliary



## MAJORITY YEAR

who attended, promised a considerable portion of the salary of a "companion sister" to the Maoris.

Mrs. Bowie, superintendent of the Deaconess' Training Home in Christchurch, also presented the case for Church workers, and outlined the possibilities of service in our cities. Sisters who were present gave details of their work day by day.

The growth of the spirit of fellowship and co-ordination between different branches of the Church was exemplified by the appointment of three Bible Class representatives to the Sunday School and Young People's Advisory Board sitting in Christchurch.

The resolution passed at Convention 1918 concerning the appointment of a travelling secretary did not at once bear fruit. The New Zealand Executive in Wanganui district, and later in Auckland, had much preparation to do before the appointment was actually possible. The payment of salary and travelling expenses would more than double the budget, and it was felt desirable to have in hand sufficient to meet the first year's demands before proceeding further. It was also recognised that a suitable secretary would not be the easiest person to find, and help was sought from the district unions and Mrs. Haslett, who had first mooted the idea. Before replies could be received word came of the sudden and untimely death in Christchurch of Mrs. Haslett, and the following resolution is recorded in the minutes of a meeting held on October 11th, 1920:—

"It is with deep and inexpressible sorrow that the Executive has learned of the sudden death of Mrs. T. M. Haslett (*née* Jessie O. Abernethy), beloved friend and counsellor of our Union. For some years Mrs. Haslett held a unique place in The Bible Class Union, rendering invaluable service not only as President of the Canterbury Union and Organising Secretary at Easter Camp, but as unofficial adviser to the New Zealand Executive. She gave herself unsparingly in service for her fellows and the Kingdom of God. Her rare qualities of heart and mind, purified and controlled by the Spirit of Christ, made her a leader greatly beloved and fully trusted. We desire to place on record our gratitude to God for her life and our deep sense of loss at her passing."

To find accommodation, officers, study circle leaders, and carry out the hundred and one details that make for a successful gathering of 200 girls was the task of the Auckland Union, an extra, second mile task, and well they did it. Business prepared in combined Executive meetings was carried quickly through at both camps. Arrangements were made for co-operation with each other and the Church for the celebration of the centenary of Methodism in New Zealand. A joint syllabus for Bible Classes was proposed, and committees in Auckland set up to prepare it. The report of Sister Nicholls, the new Maori Deaconess, was received with great interest, and a progress report of the Travelling Secretary fund presented; £230 out of the £300 necessary was in hand, and the appointment had still to be delayed.

A valuable conference of leaders and secretaries, held at the conclusion of general business, unravelled some knotty problems, and was a great aid to all in carrying on their work.



## SOUVENIR BOOKLET

**Larnach's**, and the first hint of a new order of things! For some time the fact had been recognised that a conference of 150-200 delegates did not make for quick or satisfactory despatch of business; and as that business was constantly increasing, some new method would have to be found.

The first motion to be considered at Dominion camp, 1922, was as follows:—"That in future a Leaders' Conference be held annually for three days at such time as shall be arranged—preferably at New Year; that its membership be limited to 30, the representation to be proportionate to the strength of each Union; that these delegates shall confer on all matters relating to the programme of the Movement throughout New Zealand."

The carrying of this resolution made the readjustment of other matters necessary, and it was decided to hold Dominion Camps every three years, and District camps annually. South Auckland was received into affiliation as a separate entity.

The task of selecting a candidate for the travelling secretaryship had been carried through by the New Zealand Executive, and Miss Delight Lynn, B.A., was presented to the Conference as the pioneer in this new venture, the answer to years of thought, work, and prayer. It was recognised that to blaze an entirely new trail is an herculean labour, demanding the utmost from the traveller and those at the base; and all prepared to give of their best towards the adequate furnishing forth of our new secretary. Rules for her guidance and that of unions and classes were drawn up, and with so much care and thought that the majority of them have needed no revision. Naturally at first there was some doubt in the minds of many Bible Class folk of the justification of the new office, but no one who has his or her finger on the pulse of our Movement can doubt that the strides made in the consolidation of our work, especially in the country districts, are largely due to her and her successor. All honour to the girls and boys, too, who leave home and kindred and chances of success as this world counts them, to dwell in the hurly-burly and dust of the road, for the sake of a vision!

**First Leaders' Conference.**—1923 had been declared by Church Conference to be "Children's Year," and Mr. Blamires asked the co-operation of the B.C. unions in furthering its aims, one of which was the extension of Sunday School work generally. This would be impossible unless a big supply of teachers were forthcoming. The Bible Classes already contributed largely to this necessity, and delegates promised to do their utmost to help carry out the Church's programme.

The biggest item on the agenda was the consideration of the new constitution. The old one with few and small alterations, had been in use since the second Convention, but changing times demanded its recasting. The name was the first point of departure; from a Union which was a conglomeration of smaller unions, we became a Movement! Some fear there was that our "moving" might be of the rocking-horse variety—motion but no progress! However, the vitality within bids fair to stir us to further activities rather than to lull us to sleep.

During the year the Executive and Travelling Secretary had worked on a rough draft of the constitution, so that there was ample material for discussion. Point by point articles on the aim, membership, government, organisa-



## MAJORITY YEAR

tion, and finance were pulled to pieces, and, more fortunate than our friend Humpty Dumpty, were put together again; till it seemed that provision had been made for every contingency. Alas for human hopes!

This year also saw the inauguration of the budget system as applied to our finances. Till the appointment of the Travelling Secretary our obligations had amounted to less than £200, but with the estimated allowance for the new office the responsibility was increased to £500. This was allocated to unions in proportion to their numerical strength.

The **second Leaders' Conference**, January, 1924, was held in the same comfortable quarters in Queen Margaret College. The Travelling Secretary's work having now gone beyond the initial stage, it was possible to estimate its value. Her report was critical and constructive, and a number of her recommendations were adopted. It was resolved that the office be continued beyond the present term of three years, and that the Movement's appreciation of Miss Lynn's services be recorded.

The standard syllabus had become so well and favourably known that conference ruled that it be continued with added pages of information. The finance committee presented a budget for £520, but a bank balance of £160 reduced it by that amount.

Rev. E. P. Blamires had prepared suggestions for raising the standard of leaders and training new ones. While it was considered impracticable to adopt them this year in their entirety, unions were recommended to establish classes for the study of elementary psychology, the nature and value of the Bible, Church history, and the constitution of the Bible Class Movement. Canterbury was asked to undertake the work of a commission on leadership standards to report at next Conference.

The ravages of the infantile paralysis epidemic rendered necessary the cancellation of Dominion Camp in 1925, but much urgent business waiting to be transacted demanded a meeting of leaders. Delegates were billeted in the old way, and met for business in Taranaki Street Bible Class room.

The New Zealand Secretary's report, owing to the improved returns on the class questionnaire, was a marvel of detail and efficiency, and called forth the praise of delegates. Statistics on every phase of the work had been collected by unions and tabulated for the whole Dominion. Recognition of the increasing amount of work devolving on the New Zealand Secretary was the reason for a vote of £30 to buy typewriters.

The evergreen question of holding local camps at the same time as Dominion Camp was re-opened with the following result:—"That permission be given to Unions to hold District Junior camps simultaneously with Dominion Camp, provided that leaders are not thereby kept from attending Leaders' Conference or Dominion Camp."

New features in the district reports were commented upon—the group system in use in Auckland, and the Girls' Committee in Canterbury. The last mentioned union and Otago also stressed the advantages of raising their allocations by thank-offering, and the gains in interest from holding country members' week-ends.



## SOUVENIR BOOKLET

The Leadership Training report presented to Conference was deemed to be still lacking in some points and was referred to a committee, to sit at the conclusion of the business in hand. Their findings would be passed on to the unions for adoption. The principles of co-ordination with the Y.P. Board were confirmed, as was also the scheme for the equalisation of delegates' expenses to Conference.

Routine business being concluded members were able to spend a social hour together, and to offer their thanks and good wishes to Miss Lynn on her retirement. She was also the recipient of a presentation conveying in some small measure the loving appreciation of all the Methodist Bible Class girls of New Zealand.

**"God-Speed."**—Miss Lorna Holder's nomination for the position of Travelling Secretary was confirmed, and as she entered on her new duties she was given a very warm welcome, and speeded on her way by the prayerful thoughts of all the delegates.

**Fourth Leaders' Conference,** at Eastern Hutt. One felt on entering the Conference room that one was coming home, so many tried and familiar friends were present. It is a great joy to meet, year after year, those whose hearts are in the work we love, and who are prepared to give cool heads to the consideration of our weighty problems! Some of these did demand much thought, too. It had been realised for some time that our auxiliary membership was on an unsatisfactory basis, and so the work of presenting some constructive policy was early undertaken. The question of mixed classes of boys and girls was really one of leadership, and it was felt that as our training of suitable leaders proceeds we shall be able to offer better conditions in Bible Class classes to our adolescent folk. The lowering of the moral tone in some parts of our community occasioned the stressing of the need of our young folk to maintain for themselves an exceedingly high standard of friendship and personal purity. The responsibility of the church in catering for the recreation hours of its young people was recognised in the setting up of a committee to report on the social side of Bible Class work.

As proof that our Movement is not self-centred but is trying to link up with wider interests of the outside world, two reports on world fellowship were laid on the table; reports presented by Auckland and Otago committees, which recommended first of all the extension of the idea of fellowship to kindred institutions within our own Dominion, then the developing of the idea along national and international lines, with practical suggestions for the carrying out of the same.

---

Three things would I bring to you;  
Bring as a man to his mother returning:  
A heart that is young despite the years;  
The same old unfulfilled yearning;  
And all in all, let be what would,  
The keen swift faith that God is good.

(Student.)



## MAJORITY YEAR

### Fifth Annual Conference

At Scot's College, Miramar, December 28th, 1926—January 1st, 1927.

---

Twenty-one years have passed since that historic gathering in Taranaki Street Wesley Church, when the infant Bible Class movement was floated out on the sea of time. Many folks still with us can remember the diffidence and the exultation which accompanied that first Convention when the unmistakable voice of our Captain called us to "launch out into the deep," and His promise to be our Pilot alway was claimed. The knowledge and the faith of those pioneers have been justified a thousand times, and we who are endeavouring to guide "the ship of pearl" to-day acknowledge with heartfelt thanks the debt we owe to their loving care and foresight.

It was with mingled feelings that the delegates met on this twenty-first anniversary to conduct the business of our Movement. We felt the bigness, the vitality, the power of this thing we would serve, and we felt utterly our own inadequacy. But "they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength" is as true now as when it was written, and refreshed and invigorated we essayed the constructive policy of our Movement for another year.

Our Majority year! It must be the best yet in every aspect. And as that best would depend on the contribution of every individual member, personal preparation was necessary. Thursday, December 30th, was set apart as a day of spiritual Fellowship with the Unseen. Communion service out of doors; our table surrounded by meadow green, soft purple hills on three sides of us, and a line of turquoise sea murmuring faintly on the fourth; skylarks pouring their "full hearts in profuse strains of unpremeditated art"; and the dear, familiar words of hymn and service all linger in the mind in unforgettable memory of a foretaste of the harmony above.

The Majority year programme finalised by Conference will be found elsewhere in this volume. Early last year the New Zealand Executive conceived the possibility of holding twenty-one district camps throughout the Dominion in the hope that the biggest representation yet might be in camp for our Easter celebration. Unions reported that our dream was coming true, and in most cases the posters were out and the sites chosen. Each camp will use the study, "The Kingdom of God," specially compiled for us by Miss Dorothy Rosevear and Miss Delight Lynn. This little book was tried out at our Conference, and pronounced worthy of the great occasion.

Otago's report on Leadership Training was most encouraging. Each Union had been busy laying foundations, and a number of candidates had sat and passed in Church History and Bible Study. The committee was heartily thanked by Conference for the great amount of work put into the scheme.

One of the subjects exercising the minds of thoughtful Bible Class people to-day is that of club work. Miss Bridgeman received permission to place the claims of the Girl Citizen Movement before Conference, and Auckland's recommendations considered in conjunction with them were fully discussed. The subject was felt to be so large and important that a hasty decision was



## SOUVENIR BOOKLET

impossible, and a commission was set up in Wellington to gather material on all its phases. Dr. Platts-Mills generously consented to prepare a handbook on sex hygiene for the guidance of club captains and class leaders.

For some years it has been felt that the chorus "Ever near" in frequent use in camps was not exactly worthy of our Movement, but attempts to secure something better from campers themselves had failed. One of our Methodist girls, Miss Doreen Price, of Whangarei, wrote and presented to us as a birthday gift a most charming little poem, yet to be set to music and then tried out at Easter camps. We are proud indeed to number in our ranks a young poetess of such merit.

The budget has generally been a bone of amicable dissension, but as most of the items had been considered previously the tentative one was confirmed at once, and we are committed to the raising of £530 in 1927-1928. The Mission policy, however, is to be the subject of a commission in Wellington this year, where the committee will have the advantage of conferring with the Young Men's Executive.

Sister Nicholls has been for several years our representative among the Maoris, and has carried on worthily the traditions of the pioneers. She has recently been appointed travelling deaconess, and has acquired, by the generosity of Auckland and South Auckland friends, a car, which enables her to cover much more ground. Her reports in *Link* and *Methodist Times* are eagerly read by her many supporters, and there is no more honoured guest at camp and Conference than Sister Nicholls.

We have the same story to tell now as Wordsworth's "little maid"—we are seven! Hawke's Bay, the youngest member of the family was received into fellowship on the arrival of its delegate and secretary, Miss Doris French. Its older sisters gave the baby a hearty reception, and wished it every gift that good fairies have the power to bestow.

From the New Zealand secretary's report we cull the following complete membership figures:—Senior 1,019, Intermediate 76, Junior 602, Auxiliary 308, making a total of 2,693. The number of classes, all told, is 211.

The combined secretaries' conference at the close of the business session was provocative of much discussion. Ways and means were compared, and knotty points in collecting class returns were unravelled. How to make the best use of the Travelling Secretary's time was another all important question.

What do we not owe, as a Movement, to our secretaries! The burden of organisation and correspondence on the shoulders of the New Zealand Secretary is becoming well-nigh overwhelming, and the Conference was glad to support the idea of a central office, "providing that arrangements satisfactory to both Movements can be made." This would relieve the Travelling Secretary, too, to some extent, and enable her to concentrate on more worth while work instead of being worn out by mere routine. To these two secretaries and like workers in each Union go out our grateful thanks for another year's happy and successful effort. May they long continue to find joy and peace in the service they have chosen!

After our own Conference business was disposed of we joined in happy fellowship with the Young Men's Movement to discuss the social problems relating to both. A long and careful questionnaire had been drawn up, and



## MAJORITY YEAR

one evening—all too short—was devoted to its study. The principle beyond the question was all important: "Is it the Church's duty to cater for all sides of youth's nature?" And the vexed problem of dancing was discussed—without finality—in this connection.

Sunday was a day of full retreat—Communion service in the early morning, intercession and worship later, Bible study in the afternoon, and vespers in the evening. It was a hallowed day, a time of rest and refreshment for the dusty road ahead.

From the inception of our Movement we have owed very much to our clerical advisers. We hold in grateful remembrance such names as Revs. C. Porter, Chappell, H. L. Blamires, Olds, and last, but not least, E. P. Blamires, who has been guide, philosopher, and friend on so many occasions. We pay a heartfelt tribute to the Church which was big enough to give us self-government, and generous enough to set aside such men for our mutual help and advantage. As a Bible Class Movement we are no separate entity but part of a Church, very dear to us all; a Church which 150 years ago grew out of its founders' desire to revive and serve the spiritual powers of man; and which, to-day, is just as much concerned in fostering that "righteousness which exalteth a nation."

---

Yet there was one—  
Not learned, save in gracious household ways,  
Not perfect, nay, but full of tender wants,  
No angel, but a dearer being, all dept  
In angel instincts, breathing Paradise,  
Interpreter between the Gods and men,  
Who looked all native to her place, and yet  
On tiptoe seem'd to touch upon a sphere  
Too gross to tread, and all male minds perforce  
Sway'd to her from their orbits as they moved,  
And girded her with music. Happy he  
With such a mother! Faith in womankind  
Beats with his blood, and trust in all things high  
Comes easy to him; and tho' he trip and fall  
He shall not bind his soul with clay.

(*Tennyson*).

---

Her heart is always doing lovely things,  
Filling my wintry mind with simple flowers,  
Playing sweet tunes on my untuned strings,  
Delighting all my undelightful hours.

(*Masefield*.)



## SOUVENIR BOOKLET

### The Travelling Secretaryship

---

"Dreamers of dreams do you call us?  
We take the taunt with gladness,  
Knowing that God beyond the years you see  
Has wrought the dreams that count with you for madness  
Into the substance of the world to be."

*Walt Whitman.*

In many Methodist circuits in different parts of New Zealand the name of Jessie Abernethy is one to conjure among the womenfolk. Tales are rife of her capable editorship of the local newspaper, of her unremitting and self-sacrificing devotion as the daughter of the parsonage, and as the housewife when her mother left to her care a sorrowing father and four brothers. Such memories abound whilst among women students and erstwhile schoolgirls there remains the memory of a Student Travelling Secretary, Camp Officer, and Conference Secretary who had always time to spare and expend on the most unlovable, unattractive, and retiring of those with whom she came into contact. Of love and friendship Jessie Abernethy gave royally to many folks of varied types, so that when, as Jessie Haslett, she went on to a more triumphant and larger sphere of Life in the wonder of God's "many mansions," her loss was felt keenly, not merely by her husband and family, but by very many throughout the length and breadth of this land. To this woman there first came the dream and the desire that our branch of the Bible Class Movement should have a Travelling Secretary, an agent whose business it would be to devote the whole of her time and energy to the furtherance of the Kingdom of God through the medium of our Bible Class Movement. Thus it came about that in Easter, 1922, at Larnach's Castle Easter Camp, with many misgivings and much anxiety on the part of the New Zealand officers of the Movement, and still more on the part of the young and inexperienced Travelling Secretary herself, that the venture was launched.

The task was tremendous. To make matters worse, nobody, let alone the Secretary herself, knew just what was wanted. Much advice and widely-differing suggestions were offered, while the first year was spent in surveying the field. "In journeyings oft," by land and by sea, by motor and coach, by coastal steamer and by railway, whether it be on the twelve-miles-an-hour Public Works line, or on an express dashing remorselessly through the night; thus the new life began with its task of trying to sort out new impressions and formulate ideas for improvement and progress. What was by no means the easiest, and yet was quite the most essential, part of the "job" was the endeavour to keep open heart and ready fellowship for all and sundry of a membership of some 1800; for the older, more mature and settled women who had pioneered the Movement and knew it really so much more thoroughly than the new officer, as well as for the younger, more frivolous girl at the other extreme, to whom the Movement might mean so much, could it but reach and hold her.

When the field had been traversed with a message of a full-orbed Christianity into which the Bible Class Movement would seek to draw its



## MAJORITY YEAR

members through a knowledge of Jesus Christ as an intimate Comrade; as a man first who lived a thorough man's life in his carpenter's shop and among the people of his village, and who, facing a man's problems, shared also a man's sheer human delight in beauty and the joy of living; then as Lord and Saviour who would supply dynamic to all for the following of the Great Adventure of finding God; there came the pressing problem of which line of work should be first attacked, which call to progress was most urgent.

Eventually the work followed mainly along four lines. The first may be summarised as an effort towards the deepening of the spiritual life and experience of girls through the use of more practical methods in both private and corporate prayer-life, and through a more honest effort at Bible Study with a truer fellowship in class work both on the part of the leader and the members. More efficient methods of class management, with more opportunity for all members of classes to share in the fellowship of service, led in a less direct manner to this aim.

The need for leaders more adequately fitted to carry on the work of leadership in classes, clubs, and in executive offices, had long been stressed, and led inevitably to the inauguration of the Leadership Training scheme, which has since been set on foot so ably by the Committee which then undertook it with so great a faith in its possibilities.

The inabilities and difficulties suffered by country members had also long been a crying need, and the facing of that problem resulted in the holding of Country Members' Week-ends, and the suggestion of holding camps in remoter places and at times of the year most suitable for girls in rural districts. More efficient methods of keeping in touch with outlying classes and auxiliary members were also adopted by District Executives.

There was also the problem of widening the outlook of Bible Class members. So many, even of the more senior ones, had no conception of the problems facing the world to-day, no conception of themselves as citizens of a Kingdom which must eventually embrace all peoples, which would not be complete until the contribution of China, of India, of Africa, of Japan, and of the many child races had been made to a Christianity which was erroneously being branded in many awakening Eastern lands as the religion of the white man, the religion which had produced the rampant materialism of Western civilisation which resulted inevitably in the tragedy of 1914. Thus an endeavour was made to sow the seeds of a wider consciousness, to ring in the ears of the youth of our Movement the challenge of a whole world needing real Christianity more than ever before; and with that to stress the primary necessity of knowing more about that world with its conditions and of getting into line with other Youth Movements of similar ideals.

In those first three years very little was accomplished, a little more was set afoot, while the bonds of fellowship within the Movement were to some extent strengthened, and if the ground was broken and the beginnings of the first span of a track hewed out by the combined efforts of all in any way interested, that perhaps is the greatest claim that can be made.

There are holy places where no word can be said, where shoes must be cast aside from unworthy feet, but let no reader think that for lack of telling of it, such a holy place does not exist in the heart and life of her who was accorded the tremendous privilege of first following this untried way. To



## SOUVENIR BOOKLET

say that that holy place existed in the treasure-house of her memories were not enough indeed, since to-day and always it abides as a sanctuary in her "deep heart's core" because of the growing treasure of that "priceless and imperishable gold" of human friendship, and of "her heart's best things," which owe so much of their beginnings to the challenge and the blessings of those days of travel.

Some souls there are, few and far between, just here and there in the pages of progress, to whom has come the task of laying foundations, of cutting a track. Strong rare souls are these, so steeped in the love of their task, so unwavering in their loyalty to it, that the spirit of the pioneer has seemed to stimulate each hand that took up the task, striving to put into it the dreams of former years. And to others there comes another privilege, not so great, yet greater, of building on the foundations that have been laid, of levelling and smoothing for other feet the track that has been hewn out.

After three years of the new adventure in Bible Class Movement life—a full-time agent on the field,—the position was reviewed, and it was unanimously agreed that this venture was perhaps the biggest and wisest that the Movement had yet entered into, and that the office had more than established itself as a permanent necessity to the progress and best development of our Movement life. A long-loved dream had been realized; and the hearts of many turned in grateful thanks to God for the spirit of our pioneer traveller, who had faced the loneliness and hard grind, and sometimes misunderstanding, of the unknown way with a ceaseless courage and faith that was born of an inward light. A worthy office had indeed been worthily begun.

Accordingly at Leaders' Conference, Easter, 1925, a successor was appointed, and she set off "with her suitcase in her hand," endeavouring to fill the travel-stained and fearless shoes of the pioneer. This is never an enviable task, nor was it here. And yet the privilege was great; and the challenge greater; and the nearness of Him who calls us to tasks that are too big for our strength, immeasurably encouraging. Besides this, a way had been opened, even those of our older friends who had looked on the venture with doubtful shakings of the head and some with vigorous disapproval, were by then beginning to feel more sympathetic towards our Movement's young ambitions; and more than that the way was lined with friends.

Anyone who is appointed to such a task as this must inevitably feel her lack of training, since the job itself is largely its own training-ground. Amongst many other necessities is a wide variety of experience; and so the first few months must necessarily be spent in sorting up and trying to formulate out of the chaos of new impressions and ideas that come crowding in, the best kind of workable plan, that in which she can most effectively express her life's best gifts, while still endeavouring to follow out the plan of the foundations that have been laid. By that time the scope of the job has been found to be tremendous, and the work itself enthralling—this work amongst human lives and personality, and young ones at that.

In thinking of the problems that have been and still are being faced by the leaders of our Movement, consideration must always be given the scope of its membership and the greatly differing types of girls and young women that have been attracted to give their allegiance to the Movement ideal; perhaps some of the very strength of the Movement will eventually be found



## MAJORITY YEAR

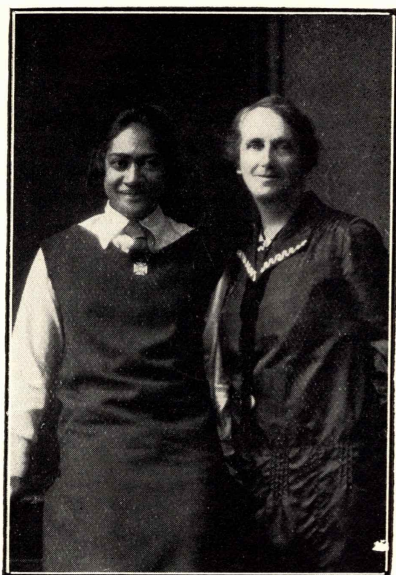
in this fact. In all programmes of study and activity there has to be considered town girl and country girl, girls in business and at home, girls in all stages of education and experience; and perhaps particularly must we keep in mind the fact that so far our membership includes but a small percentage of students. These are all matters that intimately concern a Travelling Secretary and her programme, and of all the events of the past two years, there stands out most vividly in that officer's mind the several week-end retreats with different groups of girls from officers down to junior folk, where the main purpose in each of them has always been fellowship, and a clearer ideal for our Kingdom service and our individual and corporate responsibility as Bible Class officers or members towards it.

Nearly two years have gone since the second appointment to the office of Travelling Secretary. Now in this, the Majority Year of the Movement, the office will enter its sixth year; and though we are still at the experimental stage with regard to much of our policy, long strides have been made during these past few years as a result of the ready co-operation and splendid work of Executive officers and many Bible Class leaders. Statistical returns show a very steady increase in membership, and perhaps the most progressive steps in organization are these:—The re-modelling of the New Zealand Constitution; the holding of an annual Leaders' Conference; the establishment of the Group System in Auckland, the Bible Class Elocutionary and Musical Competitions in Wellington; Girls' Committee in Canterbury; Junior Executive in Otago; a Union Sub-Committee in Southland; and the formation of countless clubs and sports-teams; the holding of Country Members' Week-ends in many of the cities; and of Annual Thanksgiving Services for the reception and dedication of class contributions to the Budget; the inauguration of the Intermediate Department; the establishment on good working lines of the Auxiliary Department, now totalling 308 members; the introduction of annual Class Questionnaires for statistical purposes; the establishment of the Leadership Training Course; co-ordination between Young People's Board and Bible Class Movements, and representation on Women's Missionary Union, and Y.W.C.A. Girls' Work Committee; the promotion through a Conference of Secretaries of a more practical understanding and sympathy between officers of all Christian Youth Movements in New Zealand; the production, together with the Young Men's Movement, of our own monthly paper and Standard Syllabus, senior and junior; the appointment of a Publicity Agent to promote the spirit of world-fellowship amongst the ranks of the Movement; and most recently, the launching of the Hawke's Bay District Union. These are all worth while things surely, and yet before them all would we value the new emphasis that is being placed on corporate intercession and the time for quiet and meditation and communion with the great Unseen. Together we have begun to face our need as participants in a world of restless excitement and busy-ness, and to realise the value of alone-ness, of the silences where deep calls to deep, and the soul of us is given room to expand.

And so the Travelling Secretary passes on her way, helping wherever she can class executives to find the real joy of their service and the best methods of class work; and leaders in cities and remote corners to mould with courage and faith and an ever-open understanding the precious soul-stuff in their care; and Union executives to realise their one-ness in the greatest job







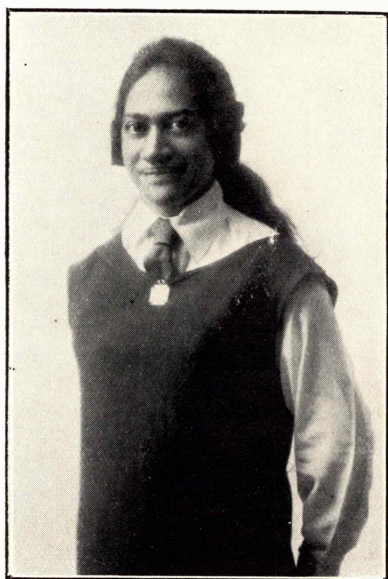
NERE MATOE AND SISTER NELLIE

For eight years our representative  
among the Maoris  
and First Wellington President



SISTER NICHOLLS

Present Bible Class Representative on  
Maori Mission Field



" NERE "

Our Bible Class Ward



MRS. PICKERING

First Hawke's Bay President,  
1927

## SOUVENIR BOOKLET

of all; and a girl here and there to climb higher up the way of Truth and Love that has been carved out by the great Pathfinder, Jesus Christ.

And she herself? The half could never be told of the richness of her experience as a road-wanderer. So many things there are which weave themselves into the very fibre of one's being, and of these one cannot speak. But she will never cease to thank her God for that priceless privilege of co-workmanship with its tremendous challenge; for the opportunity of intimate fellowship in the same big job with such rare spirits as she has found in the New Zealand Executive both in Wellington and Christchurch, and amongst officers of kindred Movements; and for the countless little "unremembered acts of kindness" and of love which have been strewn along her way by friendship, that pearl of great price.

We have already stepped into our Majority Year. How shall we answer its great challenge? Together as a united, growing fellowship of young women who desire above all else to know God and to live the Jesus Way of life, let our response be in the spirit of that idealism which craves for a place in daily living:—

"Look to the work the times reveal!  
Give thanks with all our flaming heart;  
Crave but to have in it a part.  
Give thanks and clasp our heritage—  
To be alive in such an age!"

---

Does the fish soar to find the ocean,  
The eagle plunge to find the air—  
That we ask of the stars in motion  
If they have rumour of Thee there?

Not where the wheeling systems darken,  
And our benumbed conceiving soars!  
The drift of pinions, would we harken,  
Beats at our own clay-shuttered doors!

The angels keep their ancient places;—  
Turn but a stone and you start a wing!  
'Tis ye, 'tis your estranged faces,  
That miss the many splendoured thing.

*(Francis Thompson.)*

---

. . . One who never turned his back but marched breast forward,  
Never doubted clouds would break,  
Never dreamed, tho' right were worsted, wrong would triumph,  
Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better,  
Sleep to wake! *(Browning.)*



## MAJORITY YEAR

### South Auckland District

---

At the Dominion Camp, held in Dunedin, Easter, 1922, South Auckland accepted the idea of launching out as a Sub-Union, with headquarters at Hamilton. Prior to this we were part of the vast area under the jurisdiction of Auckland Union, and indeed, owe our earliest beginnings to the efficient organising of that parent Executive, and to the personal visit of Miss Elsie Booth to several district classes. Thus was Auckland able to hand over a nucleus of 10 classes—not all flourishing, but nevertheless interested in the new venture. While Hamilton Senior Class (under the Deputy-Leadership of Mrs. W. A. Smith and the Secretaryship of Miss Jean Purdom) concentrated on initial arrangements, Auckland sent out the newly-appointed Travelling Secretary, Miss Delight Lynn, who thus acted as a “Herald” to our Cause.

Subsequently the inauguration of the South Auckland Sub-Union eventuated on 2nd September, 1922, when, in response to Hamilton's invitation, members from six affiliated and two unaffiliated classes, together with Miss Elsie Booth, then Auckland's President, and Miss Ivy Jones, then Correspondent to Hamilton Class, attended the week-end Rally. Miss Nora Buttle was at the time resident in our district, and has grown inseparably into this Union. Though in broken health and confined to her bed, Mrs. E. O. Blamires, as President, worthily holds the honour of guiding and training South Auckland's first and entirely uninitiated Executive, and continued in office until removed from the district the following Easter. Mrs. W. B. L. Williams was appointed in her place, and has faithfully and lovingly guided the destinies of our Union to date.

Within three months the district was ready and anxious to take her place as a separate Union, and accordingly Leaders' Conference, Christmas, 1922, sanctioned this move, while the following Easter Auckland combined with South Auckland in a big enthusiastic camp at Hamilton High School, and thus set the seal to their responsibilities for us.

The organisation has been based primarily on monthly Executive meetings at Hamilton, to which Cambridge and adjacent classes have been able to send delegates, and quarterly Rallies, which have been held at different centres. District Classes have steadily developed, affiliated, and shared the responsibility of Union during the four complete years of our organisation. Twenty-two classes, with a membership of 267 Young Women provide just a glimpse of the progress evidenced in this brief history. From the Bay of Plenty to Thames, from Rotorua to Taumaranui, this widespread district has awakened to the claims of the Bible Class Movement. Hamilton, Thames, Cambridge, Te Aroha, Matamata, Morrinsville, Te Awamutu, Putaruru, and Paeroa have each in turn been responsible for a quarterly rally, while the first three mentioned have catered for Easter Camps. This speaks well for the local class life and initiative, and we rejoice that Leaders of Classes and Ministers of the Church have ever been one with us in our work.

The Inner Life of the Union is revealed in manifold expressions of service and devotion. Church societies and social questions have the loyal co-operation



## SOUVENIR BOOKLET

of the vast majority of Bible Class members, and under the organisation of Sister Nicholls, Maori Sunday Schools have been left to the leadership of a few of our younger consecrated members. Foreign missions have received practical support, while Sunday Schools have, where possible, been supplied with teachers.

The General Secretary of the Young People's Department, Rev. E. P. Blamires, and our own Travelling Secretaries, Miss Delight Lynn and Miss Lorna Hodder, have each in their different spheres, assisted to develop the great spirit of one-ness which permeates the whole district. Indeed, this would seem the greatest accomplishment, that throughout the district classes, with varying opportunities, and girls of every age and outlook, have been banded together by the strong Friendship of Christian Fellowship, in the search for Truth. Naturally, such a young thriving organisation has demanded leaders, and these are to a large extent being supplied from the Union itself, a fair percentage of members availing themselves of the Movement Leadership Training Course.

The Executive, united in purpose and with whole-hearted, unflagging energy, have endeavoured to constitute a sound foundation upon which to build a monument whose future history may redound to the honour and glory of the Master of Men.

LORNA EWAN.

---

All we have willed, or hoped, or dreamed of good shall exist;  
Not its semblance, but itself; no beauty, nor good, nor power  
Whose voice has gone forth, but each survives for the melodist,  
When eternity affirms the conceptions of an hour.  
The high that proved too high, the heroic for earth too hard,  
The passion that left the ground to lose itself in the sky,  
Are music sent up to God by the lover and the bard;  
Enough that he heard it once! We shall hear it by-and-by.

(*Browning.*)

---

All the breath and the bloom of the year in the bag of one bee:  
All the wonder and wealth of the mine in the heart of one gem:  
In the core of one pearl all the shade and the shine of the sea:  
Breath and bloom, shade and shine,—wonder, wealth, and—how far above  
them—

Truth that's brighter than gem,  
Trust, that's purer than pearl,—  
Brightest truth, purest trust in the universe—all were for me  
In the kiss of one girl.

(*Browning.*)



## MAJORITY YEAR

### Wanganui District Union, 1910-27

(Colours, Green and Gold.)

So rapid was the growth of the New Zealand Bible Class Movement, and so enthusiastic were the individual classes in the respective district Unions, that at the 1909 Convention a motion—"That a new Union be created in the North Island, to be called the Wanganui Union, thus making the unions of the North Island harmonise with the districts of the Methodist Church," was brought forward. This motion was lost, and an amendment—"That the matter be deferred to the District Union for consideration, to report to next Convention," was carried.

At the 1910 Convention, Miss Harvey, of Auckland, moved—"That a new Union be formed in the North Island, to be called the Wanganui Union, the centre of which to be Hawera, and the boundaries Palmerston and New Plymouth." This was carried unanimously, and the Wanganui Union, with Mrs. Boys, Hawera, as first President, and Miss Seaby Squire, Hawera, as first Secretary, branched off from the Wellington Union with nine affiliated classes. Mrs. E. O. Blamires voiced the Convention's congratulations to the new Union, wishing it many years of usefulness and blessing. Mrs. Boys responded, and pledged the new Union's readiness to pay its share to the Maori Deaconess Fund, which it regularly did to the extent of about £25 per annum, although the Convention intimated its willingness to take only half the amount during the early years of its existence.

Mrs. Boys was most untiring in her devotion to the cause of the Bible Class Movement, and paid an annual visit to each class in the Union, thus greatly stimulating the interest of individual members. Consequently, within a year of our inception the number of affiliated classes had grown from nine to fourteen, and so great had the enthusiasm become by 1912 that we sent a letter inviting Convention to Wanganui. This proved a very great spiritual uplift, and all classes were indirectly helped, although from now onwards for some years the number of affiliated classes did not greatly increase, the highest number being about twenty, with about three hundred members. A one-time strong class would be compelled to drop out through the loss of its leader, or the removal of its keenest members, and would thus balance the entry of a new class into our Union. Several classes show a repetition of affiliation, withdrawal and re-affiliation. As the Wanganui District is very scattered, and the classes far apart, nothing much could be done to help the languishing ones. Even now with our better organisation, the matter of preventing classes disbanding through want of efficient leaders, is still a problem to be solved.

No great forward movement in the number of classes joining up was really made until the appointment of the Travelling Secretary in 1922, since when there has been a steady growth in our membership, which is now stronger than it has ever been. In the same year the system of linking up in Auxiliary Membership former scattered members, Sunday School teachers, and others interested in our work, but for various reasons unable to be active members in any class, was instituted by the Movement, and we hope that this will greatly



## **SOUVENIR BOOKLET**

strengthen our work. Miss Delight Lynn, in her first visit to our district, dealt very fully with this type of membership, and greatly stimulated our efforts in this direction. The matter of estimating membership seems now to be on a fairly satisfactory footing. At present there are 31 classes affiliated with the Union, carrying 473 members in all. This grand total consists of 175 senior, 133 intermediate, 109 junior, and 56 auxiliary members, and represents the following classes:—St. Paul's Senior, Palmerston North; Cuba Street Senior and Junior, Palmerston North; Feilding, Senior and Junior; Marton, Intermediate; Trinity Senior and Junior, Wanganui; Dublin Street Senior, Wanganui; Wanganui East, Intermediate; Aramoho, Intermediate; Cambridge Street, Senior and Junior, Gonville, Wanganui; Hawera, Senior and Intermediate; Stratford, Intermediate; Eltham, Junior; Kaponga; Bunnythorpe; Whiteley, Senior, Intermediate, and Junior, New Plymouth; Pihama; Leperton, Senior; Rongotea; Sentry Hill; Rahotu; Raetihi, Junior; Vogeltown, New Plymouth; Waitara Intermediate; Foxton, Intermediate.

A striking feature of the list is the number of country classes included. This is only one indication of the magnificent work done by the Travelling Secretaries, Miss Delight Lynn and Miss Lorna Hodder, in their respective terms of office. We are very proud indeed of the fact that the present Travelling Secretary was our Union Secretary when our executive headquarters were Palmerston North.

### **Union Officers.**

- 1910—President, Mrs. Boys, Hawera; Secretary, Miss Seaby Squire, Hawera.  
1911—President, Mrs. Boys, Hawera; Secretary, Miss Seaby Squire, Hawera.  
1912—President, Sister Jean Jameson; Secretary, Miss F. Burrell, Palmerston North.  
1913—President, Mrs. Boys; Secretary, Miss C. Jolly, Palmerston North.  
1914—President, Mrs. Boys; Secretary, Miss M. Hodder, Palmerston North.  
1915—President, Mrs. H. L. Blamires; Secretary, Miss Gwladys Jones, Wanganui. (Miss C. Spurdle Acting President, 1915).  
1916—President, Mrs. H. L. Blamires; Secretary, Miss L. E. Brown, Wanganui.  
1917—President, Mrs. E. O. Blamires; Secretary, Miss Jean Hutchens, Hawera.  
1918—President, Mrs. H. L. Blamires; Secretary, Miss Purser, Wanganui.  
(Miss Purser later left for England, and Miss C. Spurdle carried on for the remainder of the year.)  
1919—President, Mrs. J. T. Griffin; Secretary, —, New Plymouth.  
1920—President, Mrs. J. T. Griffin; Secretary, Miss B. Hartnell, New Plymouth.  
1921—President, Sister May Ralph; Secretary, Miss L. Hodder, Palmerston North.  
1922—President, Sister May Ralph; Secretary, Miss L. Hodder, Palmerston North.  
1923—President, Miss D. Bates; Secretary, Miss D. Sheat, Hawera.  
1924—President, Miss D. Bates; Secretary, Miss D. Sheat, Hawera.  
1925—President, Mrs. Gilling; Secretary, Miss M. Stevens, Wanganui.  
1926—President, Mrs. Gilling; Secretary, Miss M. Stevens, Wanganui.



## MAJORITY YEAR

The Vice-Presidents of our Union consist of the leaders of the classes together with Mrs. W. Brown, who in 1914 was made a Vice-President for life in recognition of long and faithful service to the Bible Class Movement.

**Meetings.**—With the exception of the 1913 Annual Meeting, which was held in Palmerston North, all our Annual Meetings until 1920 were held in Wanganui on June 3rd, as this was the largest and most central place. In 1912 our esteemed first President, Mrs. Boys, visited England, and before her departure was presented with an oak tray by the Executive. Sister Jean Jameson, of Palmerston North, ably discharged the duties of President in her absence, and in 1913, on her return, she was re-elected to the position, which she relinquished in 1915, when she was appointed to the Dominion Presidency. Until 1918, although the President and Secretary belonged to the same place, the other officers on the Executive were chosen from different centres. In 1918, however, the Executive members all belonged to Wanganui classes, with Mrs. H. L. Blamires at the head. In 1919 New Plymouth, under Mrs. J. T. Griffin, took over the reins of government for two years.

It was decided to hold the 1920 Annual Meeting in Hawera, as a stimulus to that portion of the district, rather than in Wanganui; and in the following year it was at Palmerston North, which was duly appointed the seat of the Executive for the next two years, with Sister May as President, and Miss Lorna Hodder as Secretary. In 1923 the date of the Annual Meeting was put forward to September, owing to the change in the Movement year. It was held in Hawera, and resulted in the appointment of a Hawera Executive, who were re-elected in 1924. Whilst Miss Dorothy Bates was an indefatigable President during this period, she proved Mrs. L. J. Williams (*née* Sister Nellie), our first Bible Class representative in the Maori work, a great tower of strength. In 1925 and 1926 the Annual Meetings have been held once again in Wanganui, from which centre all the present Executive officers are drawn.

For the last three years these meetings have taken the form of a week-end rally, and each time the arrangement has been highly satisfactory and inspiring. The Saturday afternoon has been devoted to formal business, such as receiving reports from the different affiliated classes, and the various departments of our work. These are all extremely interesting, and show that on the whole our classes are keenly alive to Bible Class interests, and are out to get the highest good from their meetings. It is a matter for deep gratitude to our Father that so many young women are anxious to find out His will for their lives. Our Union has now become so large that these reports take up the major part of our Saturday gathering, which closes with a social hour or so, followed by supper. A happy break in the proceedings has always been the tea-hour, which has provided time for the renewal of old acquaintances and the formation of new ones.

We have been fortunate enough to have had Miss Lorna Hodder with us for our last two Annual Meetings, and her addresses at our Sunday afternoon rallies on these occasions have been most searching and inspiring, and will long live in the memories of all those who made the effort, sometimes at a little cost to themselves, to be present.

**Executive Meetings.**—For the first few years of our existence, our Executive meetings appear to have been held quarterly, in different towns, with a



## SOUVENIR BOOKLET

special meeting occasionally to deal with any urgent business. A striking feature of all these gatherings was the very high standard of the devotional part, at which most beautiful addresses were given, usually by the respective Presidents. If only space would permit it these talks are all worthy of a full report, that their inspiration may be handed down to future classes. The present high spiritual tone of our Union owes very much to the standard set it by these faithful pioneers in the work.

By 1921 the N.Z.Y.W.M.B.C. Movement had grown to such an extent that more business devolved upon our District Union, and more frequent Executive meetings were held in the home town of the Executive, with quarterly Union gatherings in different centres. One of the first tasks for the Palmerston North Executive was to draw up a constitution, that members might be more conversant with the rules and management of our Union. When the seat of government moved to Hawera it was decided to hold monthly Executive meetings, and this practice still continues. At these meetings the business of our Union is discussed, but we usually try to set aside a portion of our time for intercession on behalf of the work of our Movement. Our recording secretary sends out accounts of these Executive meetings to all the classes in the Union. Although this work entails a deal of typing, it has been cheerfully and faithfully done, and we hope to reap a rich harvest from the seeds thus consistently sown.

Our quarterly Union meetings now take the form of week-end rallies in different districts, and prove to be seasons of great refreshing. Usually various ones present undertake to send a chatty report of our doings to the classes that are not represented, and in this way we hope to maintain the interest of all and strengthen the bonds of fellowship.

**Finance.**—Great changes, consequent upon the growth of the Movement, have taken place in the financial arrangements of our Union. Our first obligation was our quota towards the salary of the N.Z.Y.W.M.B.C. representative, Sister Nellie, stationed at Okiawa, Taranaki. This allocation was divided up among the classes on a membership basis. In addition to this most of the classes donated varying sums to Mission Funds from their ordinary class collections. The Movement, being essentially missionary in outlook, the needs of both Home and Foreign Missions have been kept well in the foreground amongst all our Bible Class members. At the present time St. Paul's Senior, Palmerston North, are supporting an agent on the Foreign Mission field, and Hawera Senior an orphan. These classes are worthy of special commendation for these efforts. We are very proud, too, of our Marton Junior Class, who this year have very nobly undertaken to support an orphan.

At one period we levied one penny per month per Bible Class member to provide a working fund for our Executive; this money to be collected and sent in quarterly to the Union Treasurer. The matter of the fee to be paid by Junior classes has occupied much time at many of our Executive meetings, but it is now the uniform fee of 2/6 per member. Our financial obligations at the present moment, though they involve payments to the support of the Maori Deaconess, Travelling Secretary, and native worker, as a rule do not occupy much of our time at our Executive meetings. Our quota of the New Zealand budget is allotted to us, and we assess a proportionate share of this, together



## MAJORITY YEAR

with a reasonable contribution for our own working funds, to each class, who nobly do their part, and sometimes a little more as occasion may arise. Satisfactory though this method has proved, we hope this year to raise all the money we need by means of a thank offering.

**1913 Convention.**—One of the outstanding events of our early history is the Dominion Convention held at Easter, 1913, when Young Women delegates from all parts of the Dominion were billeted in Wanganui's hospitable homes. The Young Men were camped on the racecourse at the same time, and some of our meetings were combined, notably the Sunday evening Communion service in Trinity Church, and an up-river picnic on Saturday afternoon, when all delegates gladly availed themselves of this opportunity of seeing a little of our beautiful Wanganui river.

Some of our meetings were held in pretty Trinity Church Parlour, the home of our Young Women's Bible Class at that church, but our Sunday afternoon rally took place in the church, when Mrs. E. O. Blamires gave us a most beautiful and soul-stirring address from the text, "And there was a garden." Many were the resolutions formed to make all our lives full of beauty like the garden, in spite of all the misfortune that may tend to mar that beauty. Who will forget the wonderful testimony meeting held on Monday night, when girl after girl—sometimes two or three at a time—rose to tell of the new light that had shone upon her path, and of the renewed vows of consecration that had been registered at the throne of grace?

From August, 1914, until the end of 1918 all our meetings were tinged with sorrow, as one after another of our members was bereft of loved ones who had laid down their lives fighting for their country in the Great War. Those were dark days, even for us here in this distant island, and all our Bible Class reports during that time show that the girls were doing their bit to brighten the lot of the boys at the Front. It was decided to hold a self-denial week throughout the whole Wanganui Union at the beginning of October, and to devote the proceeds as a Union contribution to the Belgian Food Fund. Special mention during those tragic times is made of Miss D. Murch, of Hawera, who saw four years of active service in Egypt and England with the volunteer sisterhood as a Y.M.C.A. worker, her name being retained on the list of Vice-Presidents during the whole of that period. To welcome her back, safe and sound, to our midst was a very great pleasure.

One of our Annual Reports during those dreadful years showed a considerable decrease of membership owing to the fact that many of our girls had gone into the Sunday School as teachers to fill the places of the young men who joined the forces. We rejoiced that our members had gone forth from the Bible Class to serve their Master in one of the greatest and noblest ways, that of trying to lead the lambs to Jesus.

**District Camps.**—Although the blessings derived from a Convention with girls billeted in various homes are admittedly very great, it was felt that still better results were to be obtained by having the girls camp together, and in 1917 the first District Camp was arranged at Castlecliff, Wanganui, for girls from the southern part of the district, with a Convention at New Plymouth for girls in the northern towns included in the district. The recorded details



## SOUVENIR BOOKLET

of these early attempts at what is now a vital part of our policy are very meagre, but they form a beginning to one of the greatest factors in the development of the spiritual life of our members. Despite all the fun and frolic that seems to predominate at certain periods of the day, these camps furnish unprecedented opportunities for fellowship, not only with one another, but with our Master Jesus Christ. Here many a girl receives her first real vision of Jesus, and her first real call to consecrated service.

In 1919 we held our second Easter Camp at New Plymouth, where Miss Enid White and Miss E. Short had proved very capable organisers.

In 1923 a very successful Junior Camp was held at Foxton Beach, where some 50 girls, with 10 leaders, were accommodated in the All Saints' Children's Home and Mr. Hodder's house. This camp was well organised by a Palmerston North Camp Committee, with Miss L. Hodder as secretary. The campers were favoured with the presence of Miss Delight Lynn, who was just commencing her itinerary in our district. A week after the camp was over the Home was unfortunately destroyed by fire, and the credit balance from the camp fund was donated to the fund for rebuilding the Home.

The following year a camp on a large scale was arranged in New Plymouth, where the Bible Class members were most enthusiastic about it, the organisers being Miss Ivy Scott and Miss Winnie Short. The Camp Home was the New Plymouth Technical School, where about seventy members of Bible classes gathered. Mrs. Avery, of Eltham, proved to be a most capable Camp Mother, and all the other offices were filled by intensely interested leaders, desirous of the utmost good. The study "No Compromise," by Miss D. Rosevear, was full of practical details of Christian life, and was greatly enjoyed by all circles. The last night of camp was somewhat marred by news of the railway strike, and the realisation of added expense contingent upon bus travelling homewards; but at the next Executive meeting this position was eased by the voting of part of the wonderful camp credit balance of £23 to defray half the extra expenses incurred by each member.

The dread epidemic of infantile paralysis in 1925 spelled the cancellation of all camp arrangements for that year, but Easter, 1926, saw the record Camp of our Union to date, no fewer than one hundred and seventeen Bible Class members being encamped on the Wanganui racecourse, seventy-nine of these being first-time campers. Miss Win Hartnell, with an enthusiastic camp committee, was a very capable organiser, the large number of campers being a splendid indication of the interest that was aroused beforehand. Great as were the expectations of each girl for a good time, they were excelled by the realisation. Mrs. Gilling, our Union President, was an admirable Camp Mother, and all the officers nobly did their part. The Bible Study Circles took studies from "The Great Adventure," compiled by Miss E. Graham, M.A., and words fail to express the blessing derived from these, from the times of quiet, and of intercession, to say nothing of the inspiration from the addresses, notably one from Rev. W. H. E. Abbey, on Womanhood. The climax of camp was the Sunday evening service in camp, followed by Communion, where many tasted for the first time the calm of sins forgiven.

**Dominion Camp, 1920.**—Wanganui, too, had the great privilege of entertaining the Dominion Camp of our Movement in 1920. Mrs. Williams (*née*



## MAJORITY YEAR

Sister Nellie) was the camp organising secretary, and she and her committee spared no pains in their efforts to make the most satisfactory arrangements for the campers, whose headquarters were the Technical College and the District High School. Miss M. Spurdle, who had had much experience in dealing with food quantities while away on active service during the Great War, was placed in charge of the commissariat department.

The members of the Women's Missionary Auxiliary met the girls at the train on the arrival, and cared for them until they went into camp at 7 p.m. This camp was a huge success, and taught the girls the true meaning of comradeship and how helpful and sacred it is when the dominating link is "The Utmost for the Highest." The financial result of this camp showed a marvellous credit balance of £60, which the Executive, at a later meeting, created into a fund to provide education for Nere at the Turakina Maori Girls' College.

**Nere Matoe.**—This brings us to the story of our special bairn, Nere Matoe. Sister Nellie, our Bible Class representative working among the Maori women and children in the West Coast Maori Mission, Taranaki, had been nursing a Maori boy, a scholar at the newly-formed Sunday School. The lad's illness was very severe, but the Sister's skilful nursing restored him to health. During the time that she was daily visiting the patient a baby girl was born in that home. The parents, feeling very grateful for the recovery of their son, asked the Sister's permission to name the baby after her, as a token of gratitude. The Sister, realising that they were just emerging from the Te Whiti religion, considered a while, and then told them that if they would allow their child to be brought up in the Christian religion she would consent to the name. At this, they were very sad, and said:—"We are sorry for your words—you have asked too hard a thing for us to do." Sister Nellie replied: "Then you must not give the child my name."

Three months later they sent for the Sister to come to their home on a certain Sunday, and to bring the Rev. R. T. P. Haddon also, that the baby might be baptised in the Christian way, the name to be Nere (Maori for Nellie). At the close of the baptismal service the father made a long speech, in which he explained, that according to ancient Maori custom, a child became the property of the adult person after whom it was named. This was a tremendous shock to the Sister! The father appealed to her to take the child by the hand, and the other children too, and lead them along the Christian Way. He said: "We parents do not know the Way, but if you will lead our children along the right track we will follow; and from to-day you are the parent of Nere."

Our Bible Class Movement straight away adopted Nere as their special charge, and for seven years the members of various Bible Classes took it in turn to clothe her for a year, and right well did they do their task.

After Easter, 1916, Nere's mother fretted very much for her child, as the next little girl had died. Who could resist the claims of a real mother? Thus, for four years Nere lived at the kainga. First her mother died, and in 1920 her father passed away, leaving the orphan child as no one's special care. So sad was her plight that her elder sister begged Sister Nellie, who was then engaged in European work, to take her back again.



## SOUVENIR BOOKLET

At the Dominion Bible Class Camp, held in Wanganui at Easter, 1920, the story of Nere was asked for and given, with the result that, as already stated, the camp credit balance of £60 became the "Nere Fund" for her education at the Maori Girls' College, Turakina. This fund was supplemented by the N.Z.Y.W.B.C. Movement.

By 1924 this fund was exhausted, but Mrs. Williams, Nere's guardian, and the trustee of the fund, specially requested that no appeal be made to the classes. No appeal, however, was necessary; for as soon as members throughout the district knew the position, a further year at school was assured for Nere, whose progress had proved a delight to her comrades of the Movement.

Each year she has gained prizes at school, and for several years has secured first for Scripture, once winning the Special Scripture Examination of the Presbyterian Sunday School Union prize. At the end of her third year she received the medal for House Dux. A scholarship which she gained kept her at school during 1925, whilst voluntary contributions from various Bible Classes made schooling possible for 1926, at the end of which year she took home the Senior House Dux gold medal, as well as a music prize.

It is Nere's ambition to train for the work of a Nursing Deaconess, and when old enough she hopes to enter hospital, preferably at Hawera. She appreciates very keenly the loving interest and assistance of all Bible Class comrades. Since 1921 her home has been with Mrs. L. J. Williams (*née* Sister Nellie), at Hawera.

We commend to you our young Maori sister, that you pray for her that her faith fail not.

**Class Activities.**—Whilst the most important part of our work is undoubtedly our class meeting on the Sunday, yet we must not lose sight of the fact that most of our classes run clubs, which bring the girls together for social intercourse and for mutual improvement. The most important of these is the Wanganui **Whakatu** Club, which seeks to bind together all the classes in the Wanganui city. This was initiated in 1919, under the captaincy of Sister Hazel Hamilton, with Miss Roa Roche as first secretary. In 1924 Miss E. Graham, M.A., became the captain, and holds the office at the present. The office of secretary has been filled successively by Miss D. Hainsworth, Miss W. Hainsworth, and Miss D. Gilling. The girls meet once a month on Saturday afternoons and evenings for recreation, tea, games, sewing, and study, and quite a lot is accomplished in these few hours month by month. Usually the recreation has taken the form of a ramble, but in 1926 a gymnasium class was formed for the afternoons. After tea some time is devoted to games, community singing, or social intercourse until the sewing hour, when the girls busily ply their needles, making stuffed animals for the district nurse. Finally they separate into circles for some form of Bible study. Very helpful courses have been chosen year by year, and the result of these gatherings has indeed been to uplift all who have attended. The leaders in this club had a week-end retreat in Castlecliff, with Miss Lorna Hodder, at the end of August, the memory of which will live long in the minds of the participators.

So enthusiastic are Wanganui Bible Class members over their Whakatu (= to uplift) that Feilding and Marton decided to organise in the same way,



## MAJORITY YEAR

and have each had one year's success. Palmerston North, too, has its Polyanna Club, run on similar lines.

Other classes at various stages of their existence have formed literary clubs, to meet once during the week and study some aspects of English literature. Then, too, most classes have their social committee, whose special duty is to attend to all social functions. The majority of our classes raise their allocation money by means of a social or concert, and the same method is adopted for raising funds to help delegates to Rallies and Camps.

All our classes render valuable assistance at Sunday School anniversaries, but unfortunately these have often been found to interfere very much with the ordinary class lessons, just when the year's work should be consolidated. Our Executive has advised trying to make a little re-arrangement in the time of meeting to overcome this difficulty.

Many classes endeavour to keep in touch with the teachers of the Sunday School by arranging a combined Sunday afternoon tea periodically, followed by a song service until church time. Sometimes on this particular Sunday they hold their class a little later than usual in order to have the presence of the teachers, as this helps to maintain the interest of those who may be auxiliary members.

The problem of preventing leakage between the Sunday School and Bible Class is one that is always presenting itself, and the solution is not easy. Some classes aim at doing this by meeting in Sunday School for the opening exercises with the scholars, who are thus constantly reminded that there is a Bible Class for them to join when they grow too big for the Sunday School. So much depends on individual conditions that no arbitrary rule can be laid down, and the problem still remains more or less unsolved.

We are proud to say that our Bible Class girls have each election year taken a share in the No-License campaign, and have thrown the weight of their influence into the fight against the Liquor Traffic.

Gratifying and praiseworthy as all these activities are, the work to which we look for the accomplishment of our highest aim, viz., the spiritual growth of our members, is the faithful sowing of the seed Sunday by Sunday in the Class itself. We owe a great deal to the leaders of our Movement, who are responsible for drawing up what is known as a standard syllabus for the Seniors and Juniors. This is a comparatively recent innovation, but it is a distinct forward move. Previous to this arrangement each class used to draw up its own syllabus, often in a haphazard kind of a fashion, with the result that some of the subjects dealt with led nowhere. We wish to congratulate the compilers of this syllabus on the splendid choice of subjects they have given us, and the very valuable hints provided in the outline and the questions submitted with each study. The number of our classes using this as a guide to their work is continually increasing. In some cases, where Junior, Intermediate, and Senior girls are compelled to meet together owing to a lack of leaders, only the fringe of the subject can be touched, but we feel that there is no reason why every girl should not carry away some helpful and instructive thought from the discussion, and be able to take some interest in the vital religious and social problems of the day.



## SOUVENIR BOOKLET

**Week-end Retreats.**—Not very much in the direction of this part of our Movement policy has as yet been attempted in our Union, for there seems to be many difficulties in the way, partly owing to the scattered nature of our district. In October, 1924, Miss Delight Lynn's itinerary included an Executive week-end at Hawera. The experiences of that week-end will always remain with those few privileged members who were able to take advantage of the opportunity for a time of very real fellowship and important study of Bible Class problems.

During the winter of 1925 the Executive (its then seat Hawera) arranged a country members' week-end retreat, but it met with poor response, owing largely to the fact that it was difficult to arrange suitable dates. Only five out of ten names handed in were able to attend. The Study Circles using "Jesus Among Men," and the social gatherings proved extremely helpful, and the closing Communion service was a sacred experience. Through this gathering we proved anew that numbers are not the only consideration, but that the two or three may meet together and realise the promise given for all time.

On August 14th and 15th, 1926, another one of these week-ends was essayed. Six visiting girls attended, and on Sunday several came by car from Stratford and Inglewood. Miss Hodder was present at this gathering, and, as always, did much to inspire and encourage all participators. The church parade brought to a close a very happy week-end for all who were privileged to be there.

**Leadership.**—We are very pleased to report progress in our endeavour to follow up the standard of Leadership Training, quite recently set up by our Movement. Miss C. Spurdle is our organiser. As a result of the discussion at Easter camp nine girls began the course with the subject of Bible study. Of these three worked steadily, and two (the youngest of the trainees) entered for the examination, one passing.

The Wanganui trainees have commenced Bible Study, with Miss Elsie Graham, M.A., and Church History, with the Rev. W. H. E. Abbey, who will also direct the studies of Correspondence trainees.

The sum of £5 has been donated by the Union Executive to form the nucleus of a library, and several books have been secured.

This brief survey of the history of our Wanganui Union shows to us that God has been working through us to bring about His Kingdom in the lives of the girls we have touched. Yet much remains to be done that the work already attempted may bear lasting results. Much prayer, too, is needed, that wisdom in dealing with Bible Class matters may be given to all our leaders, and that the knowledge of the Indwelling Spirit's power may become real to all our members.

E. LINYARD, M.A.

---

Oh, world, as God has made it! All is beauty:  
And knowing this is love, and love is duty. (Browning.)



## MAJORITY YEAR

# Wellington Bible Class Union

---

### Presidents:

1905-08—Sister Nellie Hayes.	1917-18—Mrs. Marshall.
1908-10—Mrs. W. J. Williams.	1918-19—Miss Boxall.
1910-11—Mrs. E. O. Blamires.	1919-20—Miss Maxwell.
1911-14—Miss Boxall.	1920-22—Miss H. R. Ward.
1914-15—Miss Redstone.	1922-24—Miss Williams.
1915-16—Miss H. R. Ward.	1924-25—Mrs. Scotter.
1916-17—Miss Knight.	1925-27—Miss A. E. Firth.

The inception of the New Zealand Young Women's Methodist Bible Class Movement took place at Easter, 1906, in the Wellington District. Prior to that time Canterbury, Otago, and Wellington Bible Classes had organised local Unions in their respective districts.

The idea of **Union of Classes** came from Mr. T. Ralph, who was then Leader of Taranaki Street Senior Young Women's Bible Class. Previously, little or nothing had been known of the existence of other classes, but with this linking together Mr. Ralph believed that the spiritual, mental, physical, and social aspects of a girl's life could be developed to a far greater extent.

Therefore, one Sunday afternoon in 1905, Trinity and Thorndon Bible Class members were invited to Taranaki Street to discuss the question of forming a Union of the city classes. Subsequently, the Union came into being—a Union whose boundaries extended to New Plymouth and Napier in the north, and Blenheim and Nelson in the south.

The chief activities of the Union in those days took the form of regular monthly gatherings of members, at which papers were read and addresses were given by leading Church workers. The social side of life was catered for by the Nga Konini Wekas' Rambling Club, an Archery Club, and Cricket and Hockey Clubs in season. (We have convincing evidence that so enthusiastic were the members of the Archery Club that on one occasion, on Mt. Victoria, a harmless cow was mistaken for the target.)

About this time, after considerable correspondence had taken place between Canterbury and Wellington on the subject of the formation of a New Zealand Movement, thirty-six delegates from both Unions, as well as a number of local girls, met for the First Convention at Wellington, visiting delegates being billeted in the homes of Bible Class girls.

The honour of being the first President of the New Zealand Movement fell to the lot of Miss Nellie Hayes, who was Leader of Trinity Class for many years.

The sessions of this Convention were presided over by the President, and interesting papers on "The Aims and Advantages of a New Zealand Young Women's Methodist Bible Class Movement"; "The Sisterhood of Women"; "Faith"; "Character Building"; and "Christ Risen," were read and discussed.



## SOUVENIR BOOKLET

On the Good Friday evening the Bible Class girls entertained Convention delegates, and the Young Men's Bible Class Campers at tea in Wesley Hall, after which a huge Young People's Rally was held in the church, when addresses were given by Miss Hayes and Revs. H. L. Blamires and C. Porter.

A Bible Class girls' cricket match, Wellington v. Canterbury, was played at Newtown Park on the Saturday, resulting in the defeat of the latter. In the evening the city was visited under the chaperonage of Mrs. Ralph.

During the day on Easter Monday delegates journeyed to the Young Men's Camp at Lower Hutt, and the evening in town was devoted to the last Convention gathering—a quiet talk together, when girls told of the great inspiration which the Convention had been to them. Thus our Movement was established, and we as a Union, became part of a Dominion-wide organisation, which is rapidly increasing from year to year.

At the second Annual Convention, held at Durham Street, Christchurch, 1907, it was agreed that a common bond of interest between Unions would be of great advantage, and a policy was adopted whereby our Movement would take a distinctive interest in the work among Maori women and children. To this end it was decided that we support a Deaconess on the Maori Mission Field, and so, when the call came, the first Deaconess to the Maoris from the Methodist Church of New Zealand was Sister Nellie Hayes, who had presided over the first Convention. The Dedication Service, conducted by the President of the Methodist Church Conference, took place at Palmerston North Convention in 1908. Thus was established among our members a definite objective for their interest in Mission work.

Sister Nellie commenced her work at Okaiawa, Taranaki. The most pressing need at first was a Mission Hall, and Wellington girls organised a big concert in the Town Hall, at which the programme was given by a Maori party from Otaki. The financial result of this effort, over £300, exceeded our wildest dreams, but greater even than this was the close personal contact made with the members of the party, who were billeted with our Bible Class girls. The money raised made possible the erection of the Hall, and in September, 1909, Misses M. Williams and F. Redstone represented us at its official opening. A little later a further contribution was made, when sufficient money was forwarded for the purchase of some of the furniture for the Mission Cottage and Hall, timber for the fence, and a buggy shed, and Maori hymn books and testaments.

Our members also took a practical interest in Nere Matoe, the Maori baby in Sister Nellie's charge, and many were the loving gifts forwarded to Nere from time to time.

During 1909-10 it was found necessary, owing to the increased number of classes and the scattered area comprising our Union, to organise a separate Union in the Taranaki-Wanganui District, and at Easter Convention, 1910, the Wanganui Union was formally received and recognised. However loath we were to dissociate ourselves with this part of our Union, we realised that if we were to make progress we must be prepared to sacrifice. More intensive work was necessary, and our far-reaching boundaries made such action impossible. Of the success of such a forward step there is no doubt. The history of the Wanganui Union proves the justification of its formation.



## MAJORITY YEAR

Prior to 1912 all Union business had been done at the regular monthly Rally, but in this year it was decided that in future the Union Executive should meet on separate occasions to transact the ever-increasing amount of business. Statistics show that at this period, in spite of the fact of decreased membership due to the branching out of the new Union, returns total a membership of three hundred and thirty-two members, consisting of twelve city and nine country classes.

The next few years passed without any notable changes. It was a period of consolidation and co-ordination. In 1914 War came, and while it did not actually interfere with our membership, we were caught up in the extreme unrest of the time, and that affected our Union life. Our Sister Unions had only the "sadness of farewell" from loved ones during that period; we had the Military Camps within our Union centre, and this opened up a wide avenue of service. Perhaps the salient feature of Union activity until 1919 was work among the soldiers. At first, the way was not open for us to do more than raise money for the comfort of soldiers in hospital, but later, under the guidance of Chaplain-Captain Seamer, we organised, in conjunction with the Young Men's Union, regular monthly Soldiers' Socials in Wesley Hall, invitations for which were sent to every Methodist boy and a chum. Financial assistance was derived from donations; good programmes were arranged, including a competition, the prize for which was a large and very much-appreciated home-made cake, presented in turn by the mothers of our Churches. The great Christmas Social, provided by Auckland and Canterbury Unions, took the form of a party. The huge Christmas tree, laden with parcels for the men, was only one of many enjoyable features of the evening. Amid the blowing of toy trumpets the boys were sent on their Christmas leave with the good wishes of their friends in their Church home in Wellington. A Visitors' Book was kept, containing the addresses of the men, and this enabled us to mail small parcels, etc., overseas. During the last part of the War further generous gifts were such as to allow us to hold socials more frequently, once a fortnight being the general rule. We were truly glad to have had the opportunity of assisting, in some small way, to gladden the hearts of the men before they left our shores. The happiest occasion of all, however, was the "Welcome Home" social held in August, 1919.

As with the Young Men's Movement, 1919 was the commencement of a reconstruction period in our Union. Following the policy adopted at the First Dominion Camp, Sumner, that Dominion Camps be held alternate years with District Camps, our first District Easter Camp was held at Paekakariki, 1919, when those thirty girls who were privileged to attend gained a vision of the possibilities of Union and Camp life. "Paekok" Camp stands as a landmark in our Union history. From among "Paekok" campers came many of the most enthusiastic members of our Union to-day. At "Paekok" camp we learnt many lessons of organisation; we learnt the meaning and value of Study Circles, and we formed friendships which have grown and ripened as the years passed. Other camps have been held in that same place, all worth much to the spiritual life of every camper. District camps in 1921 were abandoned in favour of the "extra" Dominion camp held in Auckland, consequently, it was not until 1923 that the next District camp was held. This was our first





MISS DELIGHT LYNN, B.A.  
First Travelling Secretary



MISS LORNA HODDER  
Present Travelling Secretary



MISSES R. and D. ROSEVEAR  
Presidents in their turn of Otago Union.









## SOUVENIR BOOKLET

venture at organising a large camp. Our paramount difficulty was the securing of a suitable camp-site—a difficulty which has not had to be faced since, as we are fortunate in having the first refusal in future years of Eastern Hutt School, Lower Hutt.

Very few of the camp officers, or indeed of the one hundred and thirty-three campers attending, had had any experience of camp-life. We believe that the success of the camp was due to the earnest prayer and work of the camp Executive, which met regularly for many weeks prior to camp. Succeeding years have but emphasised the growing importance of Easter camps. "Come ye apart and rest awhile," was our Lord's appeal to His disciples. Here is the secret of the popularity of Easter days spent thus. 1926 found us organising two camps, a Senior in Hawke's Bay, and a Junior in Lower Hutt, to meet the desires of our girls. Easter, 1927, will find us in accordance with our Majority year programme, with six organised camps in our District, Carterton, Nelson, Blenheim, Levin, Lower Hutt, and Hawke's Bay. Who can measure the results of such a venture.

A piece of service in conjunction with the Young Men's Union, and under the auspices of the "League for Christian Service among Sailors," was carried on for a number of years in our Union. Once a month a service, conducted by a member of the Young Men's Union was held during the Sunday morning on board one of the liners in Port. The girls assisted with the singing, and the men visited the other vessels to induce the sailors to attend the meeting, and also invite them to Bible Class.

The appointment of District Visitors to classes in 1921 did much to cement the relationship between the Executive and the established classes, and it also resulted in the affiliation of most of the unattached classes in city and suburbs. A beginning has been made to extend this branch of our work to the more outlying classes of the District. Reports testify to the advantages gained through such personal contact. Working hand in hand with this Department is that of the office of corresponding Secretaries to District classes. In place of the old system whereby each District class had a corresponding Secretary on the Executive, we now have two members of our Union who write and receive monthly reports. The result of this policy is shown in an increased efficiency and a deeper understanding and friendliness throughout our Union.

Perhaps the most important step our New Zealand Movement has taken during recent years was the inauguration of the office of Travelling Secretary. As a Union we welcomed with much joy the appointment of Miss Delight Lynn, pioneer Travelling Secretary. Even now we but dimly understand the depth of love, the self-sacrifice, the seemingly inexhaustible energy Miss Lynn put into her work. With her high ideals, her broad international outlook, she led us forward widening our interest beyond the borders of our own small Dominion. To her successor, Miss Lorna Hodder, we also owe a deep debt of gratitude. Developed four-square, and coming to us with a very practical understanding of girl-life, she, too, has justified the establishment of such an office.

Sport has always played a very prominent part in our history. Hockey has been a favourite pastime since the earliest days, but more recently Basketball has become even more popular, Wesley Club having seven teams in the Association.



## MAJORITY YEAR

Classes seem to be increasingly awakening to the benefits derived from Club-life. The result is that all over the District Clubs have sprung into existence. The minute details of organisation may not be identical, but the four-square ideal is common to all.

Another departure of interest latterly has been the holding of Annual Methodist Bible Class Competitions. A joint committee of the Young Men's and Young Women's Unions has had the responsibility, and it has been the means of discovering much latent talent.

As a Union we have loyally supported the publications Bible Class *Link* and *Standard Syllabus*. Both of these have become more and more popular, and we are grateful indeed for these privileges.

The Auxiliary members' department has perhaps had a more chequered career than other departments of our Union. Here, again, in accordance with Leaders' Conference ruling, this phase of work has recently undergone a great change. Whereas, in the past Auxiliary members were attached through the local Class, they now become direct members of the Union by means of an Auxiliary Secretary, whose duty it is to keep all Auxiliary members supplied with a monthly budget of happenings.

History repeats itself. The growth of our Union has been rapid, and once again it has been necessary to launch another Union. Hawke's Bay District, reaching from Woodville to Napier, and including Gisborne Classes from Auckland Union, was officially received at Leaders' Conference, 1926.

Statistics are fascinating, and it is interesting to note the growth in membership. In 1910, prior to the launching of Wanganui Union, there were twenty-three classes affiliated. Statistics to date reveal thirty-seven classes, with a membership of four hundred and fifty-eight. These figures only partly show the growth. Hitherto, what was known as Wellington Union, has now been divided into three, Wanganui, Hawke's Bay, and Wellington. Added together they make a grand total of thirty-seven classes, with a membership of 1,145, almost half of the total membership of the New Zealand Movement. Three Executives have accomplished what would have been an impossibility for one.

The real growth, however, is not to be found in statistics. Who can foretell the future of so great a number of our young women and our adolescent girls coming in direct contact with the things that matter most, the things that make for full-orbed womanhood? 'At various stages series of lectures have been arranged on "Womanhood," Sex Hygiene, First Aid, and Home Nursing. Immeasurable, too, the value of the Bible study in our Class life, Easter Camps, and the many other devotional meetings whereby we have aimed at fitting our girls for the responsibilities of life. One thinks of the members of the past and present executives who have so gladly given of their best, who have from time to time gone into retreat that they might "be still and know God; whose lives have been open to the Divine inflow from the Source of all Life, that they might spend and be spent." "What means this upward struggle of life towards vision?" Is it not that we believe we have a part to play in the future development of our race? that those coming after us will go on "from strength to strength" in an ever-widening circle of achievement? "Wherefore let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith."

DORA STEPTOE.  
ANNIE FIRTH.



## Canterbury

---

November 30th, 1904—Easter, 1927.

### Presidents:

1904-1909—Miss Cunninghame.	1919—Mrs. S. Brown, Mrs. Frank Thompson, Mrs. Haslett.
1910-1911—Miss Whitfield.	1920-1923—Sister Ruth.
1911-1913—Sister Mabel.	1923-1925—Mrs. Harvey Cook, M.A.
1914-1915—Miss Jessie Duff.	1926—Mrs. W. J. Williams.
1915—Sister Grace Crump.	1926-1927—Miss Elsie Hall, M.A.
1916-1918—Sister Mabel.	
1918-1919—Miss Abernethy, M.A.	

“Once upon a time” this was a world in which there were no Trade and Labour Unions as we know them to-day; but out of their great need the workers bound themselves together to fight for better conditions in which to live and bring up their children. Twenty-three years ago Unions of this kind were springing up with mushroom growth in all industrial centres, and the spirit which animated them became a great cosmic force governing economic situations. A girl in an Addington Bible Class (name unknown now) asked one Sunday this question: “If Union is strength to those who are fighting for the necessities of physical life, wouldn’t a Bible Class Union help on the Church’s work among girls, and foster the aims of the Kingdom of God generally?”

Mrs. Lockwood, the class leader, carefully shepherded that discussion, and saw that the vital germ in it did not die of inanition in a Sunday’s talk. The idea was passed on to other classes in the city, where its startling nature caused girls to sit up and take notice. It was then discovered that the Presbyterian Union was already an accomplished fact, and that our own Young Men’s classes were considering the same thing. Pros and cons were thoroughly discussed, a united meeting of Christchurch classes was held, and letters seeking information were sent further afield. By November 30th, 1904, all was in train to inaugurate the Union. At an enthusiastic meeting representative of all the city and suburban classes, Mrs. Lockwood, doyenne of Bible Class leaders in the district, moved: “That a Canterbury Young Women’s Methodist Bible Class Union be formed, to be extended later into a New Zealand Union if the venture prove a success.” This resolution was carried amid great excitement, and Mrs. Dewsbury, wife of the then superintendent of the district, was elected President, Mrs. Lockwood and Miss Cunninghame (Durham Street Class), vice-presidents. Miss Collier was first Secretary, Miss Fitzer (whose daughter is now a valued member of our Union) assistant, and Miss Pascoe, Treasurer.

At the first meeting twelve classes affiliated, the number steadily increasing month by month till all the Canterbury classes had linked up. The motto chosen was: “The love of Christ constraineth us,” and the aims and methods of working were practically the same as those afterwards incorporated into the New Zealand Constitution. From the first the Union proved a



## MAJORITY YEAR

source of strength and power as the classes learned of each other and banded themselves together into a fellowship of love and service. Meetings for prayer were held fortnightly, and a big rally monthly with tea and time for social intercourse.

At Christmas time the next year, 1905, Mr. Ralph, leader of Taranaki Street Bible Class, on his way home from Dunedin, paid our union a visit. He told of the amalgamation of Otago classes and their progressive programme, and having learned of the success of our venture, approved the idea of a New Zealand Union, for the mutual benefit of the various districts. Being a man of action, he promptly set Wellington folk thinking and planning to bring it about. At Easter, 1906, was launched the New Zealand Union, in what manner you will read elsewhere. Miss Hayes presided over the actual Convention, and Canterbury had the honour of supplying the first New Zealand President, Miss Cunninghame. It is a coincidence that during this our Majority year, the New Zealand Executive is again in Christchurch, and a Canterbury woman in the presidential chair.

The first task before the Union, in conjunction with the New Zealand Union, was that of preparing for Easter Convention in 1907. Nowadays, when we plan for such gatherings, we have the experience of years to fall back upon. Then there was only the inaugural function as a guide; standards to be created, and traditions to be built up. To make billeting more difficult it was Exhibition year in Christchurch (how our Otago friends will sympathise!) and at least three other conventions would be enjoying the town's hospitality. However, everyone worked with a will, so that all visitors were happily housed. Two things stand out in this Convention: the fellowship at the combined Bible Class service in St. Paul's with Presbyterian and Baptist Bible Class folk, and the big interdenominational temperance demonstration.

I suppose most Unions have discovered gaps in their records, and Canterbury is no exception. The first annual report available is for 1909, and one of the most astonishing statements it makes is the lack of time for spiritual and social converse! We had thought that this cry belonged strictly to our own times. Miss Cunninghame, our president since 1905, sailed for England this year, leaving us very forlorn. She had been a tower of strength, a splendid friend and guide in every realm; and so well had she builded that we were able to carry on without a leader for more than a year without suffering any serious drawback. The 1911 report speaks enthusiastically of the progress of work among the country classes—dear familiar names, such as Kaiapoi, Tai Tapu, Leeston, Timaru, and Ashburton. Addington Class, anxious to do some definite service for those less fortunate than themselves, formed an "Honour League" to spread the gospel of the power of true womanhood. The idea was keenly taken up by the Union and other organisations such as the Y.W.C.A. and the Presbyterian Bible Class Union, who combined to hear a series of lectures given by Mrs. Talbot, wife of one of our doctors.

Baby Nere, Sister Nellie's little charge, now two years old, made a strong appeal to the practical side of our girls, and Sydenham class secured the honour of clothing her for the year.

The secretary for 1912 (she didn't sign her name!) started a new era by giving statistics which made her report look extremely up-to-date! Classes



## SOUVENIR BOOKLET

jumped from 14 to 22, membership from 262 to 398, average attendance at Union meetings was 63, and the highest, 88. Much of the increase was due to the efficient work of the class visitors, who called on almost every class—town and country—at least once during the year. They reported the beautiful furnishing of two class rooms; in one case the renovations were the surprise gift of two members; in the other the girls gathered blackberries and made bread, which they turned into linoleum and curtains!

Sister Mabel has been a wonderful help and inspiration to our Union since the beginning, and under her presidency, 1911-1913, every phase of our work prospered. Her Bible readings and talks at Union meetings are still gratefully remembered by some of us older folk, and the pre-camp, or, as it was then, pre-convention Communion service, revived by her, is still our best loved Union meeting. Mothers' Day was instituted in 1912 under her leadership, a day increasingly celebrated as the years go by.

**Journal.**—There are in existence still four volumes of the "Union Journal, begun in July, 1912, and continued in 1913, 1914, and 1915. Articles were contributed by most classes, country girls particularly blossoming out into authorship. There were editorials, dissertations on such subjects as "What constitutes a model Bible Class?" "Friendship," "The Calls of Christ," "Preaching by Shining," "Nordica's Voice"; a correspondence section containing queries on many points, and numerous helpful suggestions; an advertising section with paragraphs like this: "Lost! The habit of hearty handshaking. Anyone helping to restore the same will benefit humanity generally, and be handsomely rewarded personally." "Wanted immediately—The interest and personal help of Bible Class folk not attending the Union meetings. Intending applicants please put in an appearance at next monthly gathering."

The Poet's corner contains some original verse of good quality, and many selections from well-known writers. Here's a sample:

"Do you wish the world were wiser? Well, suppose you make a start  
By accumulating wisdom in the scrap-book of your heart.  
Do not waste one page on folly; live to learn and learn to live,  
If you want to give man knowledge you must get it ere you give."  
(E. W. Willcox).

Class notes on outstanding events, and "Stray Leaves," being helpful quotations, completed the journal. It was passed round from class to class during the year, and served as a strong link in the Union chain.

The years 1913 and 1914, which saw the Union of Primitive and Wesleyan Methodist churches, brought into fellowship two more classes, Cambridge Terrace and Geraldine; and saw also the beginning of our closer alliance with the Women's Auxiliary of Home and Foreign Missions. A new orphanage was opened at Papanui, and both organisations set to work to raise money for furnishings. The Auxiliary have "big-sistered" us ever since, sharing all our interests and entertaining us at an evening party once a year. We seize this opportunity to say a word of thanks and appreciation for all the kindness we have received from them collectively and individually.



## MAJORITY YEAR

The second decade of our existence was commenced under the shadow of the war, which necessarily meant some upheaval in policy. Much time was given in classes to the raising of funds for the Red Cross, and the collecting of clothes and money for Belgian refugees. The orphanage, now an accomplished fact, called for service of a practical nature. For some time the various city and suburban classes took their turn each Saturday in doing the children's patching and darning. It was a labour of love both to Sister Mabel and the orphaned bairns, whose numbers increased so much as the war dragged its weary length. Each year since the Bible Class folk have contributed, either through their churches or the Union direct towards a little Christmas gaiety for the children.

The Chicago school for training Deaconesses offered in 1915, through Sister Grace Crump, two scholarships to New Zealand young women anxious to prepare for such a sphere of work. The two to whom the original offer was made were forced to refuse it, but Miss Jessie Duff, our President, and Miss Ella Griffin were more fortunate. Their sailing for America left a gap in our official ranks, which was further widened by the marriage of our secretary. Sister Grace was elected President, but at the end of the year was recalled to England, leaving the chair again empty. It was difficult to find someone willing and able to take the office, but Sister Mabel, though in need of a long rest, consented to guide our destinies again. It was an onerous task with the rapidly increasing oversight and organisation demanded. This year we reached the high-water mark of our membership, 464, and topped the list for New Zealand.

Again there are gaps in the records, the next discoverable report being for 1919. The year is noteworthy for the departure of three of our workers for the Islands, Sister Lily White to Fiji, Sister Constance to the Solomons, and Miss H. Roscoe to teach in a Government school in Suva. Sister Edith Walton also had to relinquish some of her Bible Class work when she took up the Secretaryship of the Society for the Protection of Women and Children.

The beginning of the year 1918 saw the inauguration of the new policy of camp, instead of convention, a very notable change. Canterbury was honoured in being the Union to carry through the new venture, under the capable secretaryship of Miss Jessie Abernethy. The experience was so good, and the demand for more camps like Sumner so great, that we have not reverted to the old idea, but have progressed steadily in the planning and carrying out of district camps till this year we hope to run five, so that as many girls as possible may celebrate our twenty-first birthday in camp.

1919 also saw the end of the old unwieldy executive, which was turned into a district council, to meet quarterly. There it did not long survive, but expired quietly of inanition. A new and lively executive of nine members took its place, and with every member feeling her responsibility, the work of the chief officials was considerably lightened. The numbers were increased later to 22, but the size did not make for efficient working, and was again reduced to 14. A most successful innovation has been the Girls' Committee, consisting of a member of each town class, and officered by President and Secretary. The girls at present in office are Miss Kathleen Dennis and Miss Rae Barrell.



## SOUVENIR BOOKLET

The committee considers class problems, sends recommendations to the parent Executive, on which it has representation, conducts a Bible study, runs social functions on occasions, takes charge of one Union meeting each year, and generally forms a strong bond of friendliness between the classes, besides being a splendid training ground for officers. Our present Union Secretary, Miss Eva Quigley, gained her experience on the Committee.

As so many of our Bible Class folk had turned their steps towards service in the Islands, and our thoughts and prayers followed them continually, it was natural that the girls should wish to send some tangible expression of their goodwill. Miss Ethel Jennings organised a missionary social to collect gifts, and was able to send several boxes of useful articles—carriage free, by courtesy of our Big Sister organisation—as a Christmas surprise. She has undertaken the same task each year since, for which labour of love we shall ever hold her in grateful remembrance. In 1923 we joined with the Auxiliary in farewelling Miss Common and Nurse Sanders to the Solomons, and later yet another, in the person of Miss Lina Jones. Sister Jean Dalziel, leader of the Addington class, was the last to leave us for the same destination. Is it any wonder that Canterbury holds the Mission cause its most sacred trust?

Several years ago Miss B. Cowie, a faithful friend of our Union, made us a beautiful banner in the Canterbury colours—red and black. This is held each month by the class with the highest average attendance for the previous month, and recently a country class won it with 94%!

The Travelling Secretaryship had now loomed above the horizon, but much of our joy in its imminent realisation was wiped out by the death of her who had first dreamed of it. Mrs. T. Haslett (*née* Jessie Abernethy) died October, 1919, leaving the whole Movement poorer for her loss, but the office she instigated goes on, a living memorial to her gracious memory.

With the coming of Miss Lynn we felt a new breath of life, especially in our country classes, which were too far away to benefit much from central activities.

The claims of the Union were presented to hitherto unaffiliated classes, with the result that our numbers, curiously enough, have crept up again to that peak attained in 1917, viz., 464, for Senior and Junior membership, in 39 affiliated classes, plus 76 for Auxiliary. Country members' week-end in August has more than justified itself in the increased attendance and resultant friendliness. Last year we actually had with us a girl from far-away Timaru! The inauguration of Thanksgiving Sunday, held during our country girls' visit, when all classes present their offering for the work of the Movement, has overcome the bug-bear of finance in the happiest and most beautiful way. Our other bug-bear—lack of leadership—still raises fearful head, but with the organising of our training classes—(we made a good start with six passes last year)—and the development of the spirit of joyful service and co-operation with Christ, our Master, we hope to lay low even that fiery dragon.

---

Earth's crammed with Heaven, and every burning bush aflame with God,  
But only those who *look* may see . . . . . (*Browning.*)



## MAJORITY YEAR

### Otago District

---

**Presidents, 1905-1926**—Sister Olive (Mrs. W. J. Williams), Sister Annie Mrs. E. O. Blamires), Miss J. Kay (Mrs. B. Tinsley), Miss L. Walton (Mrs. S. Brown), Miss J. Maxwell (Mrs. C. Bradfield), Mrs. Pinfold; Miss Purdie, Sister Ruth, Miss D. Rosevear, Mrs. B. Metson, Miss R. Rosevear.

#### **Letter from Miss Eliza Mullins to Miss Elizabeth Sande.**

Dear Elizabeth,—Congratulations on your appointment to the position of Secretary of the Otago Young Women's Methodist Bible Class Union.

As your maiden aunt, and a former secretary of the Union, I feel it my duty to write you a dissertation on your heritage. You probably will not take the trouble to find out the worth of it for yourself.

I have collected about six minute books, and have delved into them all, so prepare yourself for a somewhat lengthy epistle, my dear niece. . . .

"A meeting of representatives of the various Young Women's Methodist Bible Classes of Dunedin was held in Trinity schoolroom on Monday, June 11th, to discuss the advisability of forming a Union of the Young Women's Methodist Bible Classes of Otago. . . . It was decided to form a Union of the classes, the name to be the Young Women's Bible Class Union, its object, the furtherance of the Bible Class Movement."

Thus runs the opening paragraph of the minutes of the first meeting. That is the birth notice of the Union, isn't it?

Could Sister Olive, now Mrs. W. J. Williams, of Deaconess House, you know, elected that Monday evening as the first President of the Union, have pictured another night years later when she would be an honoured guest at the Union's twenty-first birthday banquet, for the which all arrangements were made and carried through by the Junior Executive, the vision would have lightened the responsibility of this new venture.

By the way, it was at this function that Mrs. Williams referred to herself as an "antique!"

The constitution drawn up at that first meeting has continued through the years with but few alterations.

A system of class visitation was early inaugurated, the nearer classes in the city interchanging first, and afterwards going further afield. When it was not possible for a full class to visit, delegates were sent, the motive being to foster a general interest among the classes, and also to glean information concerning methods of work.

The social, as well as the spiritual, development of Bible Class members was encouraged in those early days. Two tennis clubs were formed in 1906, Betty, and a hockey club in 1907.

I think you will agree with me that the success of the Union from the beginning lay in the fact that it was not wholly self-centred.



## SOUVENIR BOOKLET

In 1907 the Bible Classes throughout the Dominion pledged themselves to support a Deaconess, to work amongst the Maoris. From the minutes one would gather that the suggestion originated with our President. Whether this is correct I cannot say. If any other Union lays claim to the honour, Betty, you will hear of it very soon no doubt.

Otago's allocation towards this united effort was £25 per annum for several years. The bulk of this amount seems to have been raised by the Union as a whole, the only direct contribution asked by the Union from the classes being a levy of 6d. per member, 4d. of which went to the District treasury and the remaining 2d. to the New Zealand exchequer.

Various means were used whereby to raise the amount necessary to meet Otago's obligations to the New Zealand Union.

Who are there amongst the Bible Class members of other days who do not still feel a thrill at the remembrance of the "Silver Tree Entertainment," "The Spring Morning Breakfast," "The Daffodil At Home," when the members of the different classes in and around the city worked hand in hand, and worked hard to bring these efforts to a successful issue? They did much to strengthen the Union in their time, and were stepping stones to a higher plane of responsibility when classes would be individually responsible for their own especial allocation.

Just as the name of Mrs. Williams is so vitally connected with the very beginning of the Union, so I think must the name of Sister Annie—(you know her as Mrs. E. O. Blamires, Betty)—be always associated with "The Silver Tree Entertainment," and "The Spring Morning Breakfast" functions, the success of which was largely due to her great organising ability, and to her own deep enthusiasm for the Union, whose objects were vital to her very life work.

Then, Betty, you must know who the first secretary of the Union was. She was Miss Edith Walton, later Sister Winifred, of Durham Street Church, Christchurch, and now Mrs. Porter, of Takapuna, Auckland. Her contribution to the Union in the early years of its life cannot be too highly estimated.

In the course of time the Otago Union sent forward a recommendation to the New Zealand Executive to be brought forward at the annual business meeting: "That the allocation for the Deaconess Fund be put upon a proper basis, viz., that the amount raised by each Union be in proportion to the number of classes affiliated with the Union."

That was the beginning of budgeting according to membership, wasn't it? Thus our allocation was considerably lowered, and classes came to take over the full responsibility of raising their own quotas.

Have you ever wondered, my dear Elizabeth, if the Otago Bible Union always met on the first Monday of the month? Once upon a time there was no such thing as a monthly Rally. In the very beginning of things, the members of the Union met quarterly. Business first, followed by a devotional meeting, after which there was time spent in social intercourse and supper.

The Executive, consisting of Union officers plus all leaders and secretaries of affiliated classes, plus delegates from affiliated classes in the proportion of



## MAJORITY YEAR

one to every twenty members, met regularly between quarterly meetings till 1911, when a new departure was made, and the Executive (note its size, Betty!) was asked to meet on the first Monday of each month. Still the quarterly Rallies continued till June, 1915. Then it was proposed "That the Union meet as a body the first Monday of the month, and that a syllabus be drawn up for that purpose."

Thus for a year all business was dealt with in the open meetings. In 1916 it was decided that Executive meetings be held half an hour before the Union Rallies.

Teas prior to Rallies were inaugurated that same year. They were "on approval" for three months. As you know, they still continue. . . .

But the large Executive, with so few permanent members, was found to be unwieldy and most unsatisfactory. This led in time, 1923, I think, for things move slowly, to a revision of the Constitution, the main alteration being in the "government" of the Union.

There is no need for me to tell you, Betty, that the Executive now consists of 14 members, all of whom help share the responsibility of directing the affairs of the Union, and that it meets on the last Saturday in each month, with each member taking her turn at leading the devotional period which precedes the business. You know, too, of the agenda you have to prepare and send out to the members beforehand.

The nature of the Rallies, too, have changed with the years. The syllabus now may include an oratorical contest, a debate, perhaps arranged by the Auxiliary members, a literary or musical evening, group discussions, "Mothers' Night," and many other interesting and varied subjects.

The Junior Executive, which meets when necessary, and discusses Union affairs from the point of view of the "Junior," is of very recent formation. Already it is proving of inestimable value to the Union in many ways.

The first Convention held in Otago took place at Easter time, 1911, in Dunedin, when arrangements for the hospitality of delegates and all social functions were carried out by the Union.

Again, in 1915, the Convention was invited to meet in Dunedin, although still the Union felt unable to shoulder the responsibility of the New Zealand Movement and to officer its Executive even for a year.

If a developing sense of responsibility is a sign of growth, the locating of the New Zealand Executive in Dunedin, 1921-1923, is noteworthy. In this connection the onus of responsibility fell upon Sister Emily and Miss Grace Gibbs, who filled the positions of President and Secretary respectively.

Upon this Executive devolved the task of finalizing the Travelling Secretary venture, and of officially appointing the first Travelling Secretary.

Betty, believe me, it was a "never-to-be-forgotten" moment when, in a small room high up in the Central Mission buildings, one member of the Executive waxed braver than her fellows, and boldly moved that "Miss Delight Lynn be appointed to the position of Travelling Secretary." Could that Executive have glimpsed the future of the Otago Union even, each member would have vied with the other for the honour of moving that motion.



## SOUVENIR BOOKLET

This Executive, too, with the valuable assistance and lead of the Travelling Secretary, carried through the first Leaders' Conference.

The fourth Dominion Camp was held in the Otago District in 1922. I guess you have heard of "Larnach's."

A boarding house by the sea, some fifty miles south of Dunedin, will, in the minds and hearts of some people be for ever associated with the Otago Bible Class Union.

It was the scene of the first District Camp, held from December 26th, 1916, to January 2nd, 1917.

And—it was a momentous happening, for in the opinion of some, it was then that the Union ceased to be merely an organization.

That Camp marked the beginnings of that "fellowship" which has grown with the years, and of which the Union to-day is justly proud.

Miss Rosevear, your President of to-day, Betty, was at the head of this venture, an adventure in real truth, for no other member of the Union had any experience of, or knew anything about, the inspiration of Camp, save her who was Chief Officer for the first two Otago Camps.

Camps have long since become an integral part of the Union's activities. That, in itself, is sufficient indication of the worth of those pioneer Camps, when almost the entire responsibility rested upon the shoulders of one person.

The first Camp under real camping conditions was held at Waikouaiti, Easter, 1923. This method proved so successful that now no other is ever mentioned.

Betty, I wish I could tell you something of *all* the keen enthusiasts who have through the years rendered yeoman service to the Union, that you might catch something of their spirit, and give still greater service because of their sure foundations.

Just at present I am thinking of Miss Jessie Kay, now Mrs. Tinsley; Miss Jean Maxwell, now Mrs. Bradfield; and Miss Lena Walton, Mrs. Brown, of Invercargill, whom you know. They were the outstanding personalities in the Union during the years from 1910 to 1915.

Mrs. Brown has continued to give herself to the Union. There seems to be no important office she has not filled at some time. First Secretary, then President, after which we find her rallying up the Invercargill Classes to vital connection with the Union. She was "Mother" at the Milton Camp in 1924. Now she holds the position of chairwoman of the newly formed "Sub-Committee" in Invercargill.

Mrs. Pinfold, Miss Purdie, Mrs. Metson, are names esteemed and honoured in our Union.

During the lifetime of the organization the classes beyond the city bounds have been strengthened by the bond of union, and have shared the privileges and responsibilities to a certain extent.

Although prevented, many of them by distance, from attending monthly Rallies, they have received reports of such month by month for many years.



## MAJORITY YEAR

Camps are theirs, and an innovation known as "District Members' Weekend" has further cemented the ties of friendship.

The Union has developed tremendously of recent years. If you want statistics here you are, Betty. In 1917 the membership was 170. To-day it stands at 393.

All the later developments are more or less the outcome of the progressive policy of the New Zealand Movement.

From the New Zealand Movement came the suggestion of the District Camp, which now plays such an important part in the inner life of the Union.

From the New Zealand Movement comes the Travelling Secretary, whose contact with individual Bible Class members and with country Classes re-acts both on themselves and their Union.

And last, but by no means least of the gifts from the Movement comes the Leadership Training Course, around which many of the hopes of the future centre.

Well, Betty, I have finished. But facts are—well, just facts cold, dry, and more or less uninteresting. No amount of minutes give any personal history of those who have given their time, energy, brain power, and devotion in this form of service.

Nevertheless, "between the lines" much can be read. There are endless meetings to attend. Much energy must be spent in planning social functions.

Yet those who have made this service part of their daily living will testify they have been "made" by that service.

He who is at the very centre of the Bible Class Movement, controlling, moulding, and possessing it, still has time to devote to individuals, and many through the Otago Bible Class Union have received "more abundant life."

The heritage of the past is great. 'Tis yours to make it greater, my dear Elizabeth.

Your well wishing

AUNT ELIZA.

(Contributed by D. Rosevear.)

---

I love all beauteous things,  
I seek and adore them;  
God hath no better praise,  
And man in his hasty days  
Is honoured for them.

I, too, will something make,  
And joy in the making;  
Altho' to-morrow it seem  
Like the empty words of a dream  
Remembered on waking.

(Bridges.)



## SOUVENIR BOOKLET

### Auckland District

---

#### President:

1906-7 —Mrs. Parkinson.  
1907-8 —Mrs. Armitage.  
1908-9 —Mrs. Armitage.  
1909-10—Mrs. Armitage.  
1910-11—Mrs. Armitage.  
1911-12—Mrs. Armitage.  
1912-13—Mrs. Armitage.  
1913-14—Miss Harvey.  
1914-15—Miss Harvey.  
1915-16—Miss Harvey.  
1916-17—Miss Champtaloup.

1917-18—Miss Gunson.  
1918-19—Miss Gunson.  
1919-20—Miss Winstone.  
1920-21—Miss Winstone.  
1921-22—Miss Winstone.  
1922-23—Miss Booth.  
1923-24—Miss Booth.  
1924-25—Mrs Benfell.  
1925-26—Sister Winifred.  
1926-27—Mrs. Whyte.

#### Whakatu Club, 1919-1927.

##### Captain:

1919-20—Miss Jones.  
1920-21—Miss Rice.  
1921-22—Miss de Luen.  
1922-23—Miss Hayward.  
1923-24—Miss Clark.  
1924-25—Miss Clark.  
1925-26—Miss Hayward.  
1926-27—Miss Hayward.

##### Secretary:

Miss Purser.  
Miss Jull  
Miss Hayward.  
Miss M. Worsley.  
Miss M. Worsley.  
Miss L. Worsley.  
Miss Farland.  
Miss Vincent.

As one reviews the history of the Bible Class Movement in Auckland, as recorded in its earliest minute books, it is encouraging to find that names mentioned therein are still honoured and loved by us in the life of our Union to-day. The patient, unremitting toil of these earliest workers bears fruit to-day in an ever-growing and expanding Union, and we rejoice that our founders, or most of them, are here to see the results of their labours and to lead us on as they led twenty-one years ago.

The inaugural meeting of the Union was held on 21st June, 1906, at Pitt Street, and represented at that meeting were members of Pitt Street, St. John's, Grafton Road, Mt. Albert, Mt. Eden, and Helping Hand Mission Classes. The honour of moving that a Union be formed in Auckland belongs to Miss Louie Woodhead, of St. John's Bible Class. Mrs. Parkinson was the first to occupy the position of President, and our first Secretary was Miss Ruby Fear. Other names that figure in the report of that first meeting are Revs. H. L. Blamires and A. J. Luxford, Mesdames Armitage and Bond, Miss Cunninghame, then New Zealand President, Miss Hayes, now so well known as Sister Nellie, Misses Harvey, Reid, and Cowley.

During its first year the following classes affiliated with the Union:—Pitt Street, St. John's, Grafton Road, Mt. Albert, Mt. Eden, Helping Hand Mission, Hamilton, Aratapu, Te Kopuru, and Whangarei. Each year since then has



## MAJORITY YEAR

seen the steady growth of the Union, until from this humble beginning we now have two flourishing Unions, Auckland and South Auckland; Auckland Union numbering 49 Classes, with a total of 536 members.

The Union has always made keen efforts to retain the interest of affiliated Country Classes, and a personal interest has been maintained by the appointment of a correspondent for each Class, which thus received interesting reports of the Union and its activities. Our present method is to have one Secretary who has charge of all Country Class reports, and the same report is sent to each Class, ensuring that all Classes receive a report after each meeting, which was not always possible when each Class had a representative who did not or could not attend all meetings.

Visitation of city Classes has been carried on with more or less regularity since the early days of the Union, but some years ago this was extended to include the nearer country Classes, and the increased enthusiasm and spirit shown by these outlying Classes more than justifies the efforts made to secure and retain their interest in the Movement.

City visiting is still a large feature of our work, our present officers of this department being Misses Hayward, Buttle, and Jones.

Evidence of the varying fortunes attending our Northern Classes is found in the fact that Aratapu, Te Kopuru, and Whangarei were affiliated to the Union in its first year, but later, owing no doubt to the decline of country towns these Classes lapsed. To-day, however, there are encouraging signs of a revival of Bible Class life in our winterless North, and Aratapu has again identified itself with the Union.

The membership of the Union has developed in various ways. Of course, there has always been the division into Senior and Junior members, but after the first Auckland Camp it was decided to approach members of Training Classes with a view to receiving them into affiliation. This was carried out, and there are now several Training Classes on our roll.

As far back as the writer can remember, Auckland has always enthusiastically supported the Graded Sunday School system, this having very definite effects on our Bible class work. One effect is that in graded schools many more teachers are required, and the leaders of the School must of necessity call upon the Bible Classes to supply these extra teachers. From the Bible Class Union point of view this divides the interests of our members, and inclines to make them neglect the Union, yet we are glad that members can be trained in our Bible Classes to become useful teachers and officers in our Sunday Schools.

A very important branch of the Union membership is the Auxiliary membership, commenced in 1923, and under the care of Miss W. Caley has grown mightily. An auxiliary member is one who cannot regularly attend a Bible Class, or Union gatherings, and yet wishes to be identified with the activities of the Union. To these auxiliary members reports of all Union meetings are sent, and thus we are able to retain the interest of those who otherwise would know nothing of the Union, its officers, or its programme.

During the year 1922 our Hamilton Bible Class, the most successful and enthusiastic of our South Auckland Classes, felt that the time had come when



## SOUVENIR BOOKLET

a new Union could be formed, having its headquarters in Hamilton. It was not until after Leaders' Conference at the end of that year, however, that the South Auckland Union was officially launched. From the Auckland Union went our President, Miss Booth, and the Hamilton correspondent, Miss Jones, to lend grace to the opening functions. Although, of course, it was a matter for regret that Auckland Union should lose some of its strongest classes, yet the formation of this South Auckland Union, under the presidency of Mrs. E. O. Blamires, and the splendid secretaryship of Miss Lorna Ewan, was a big step forward, and there has been no regretful looking back on the part of those who so valiantly undertook to oversee the welfare of their less vigorous neighbours.

In 1913 Church Union, as far as Wesleyan and Primitive Methodists were concerned, became an accomplished fact. No time was lost in getting into touch with the girls of the Primitive Bible Classes in and around Auckland, and here the Union Secretary of the day found a great helper in Miss Olphert, who spared no effort in interesting the Primitive Bible Class girls in the Union. As a further means of cementing the bond thus formed by our Churches, a Hockey Club was formed, calling itself "Whakatu Club," this in 1915 winning the Junior Championship of the Auckland Hockey Association. The captain of this Club was Miss E. Booth, later a Union Secretary, and then President, the Secretary being Miss I. Stenberg. Unfortunately this Club did not exist for long, but it served to bring about closer union between the girls than might otherwise have been achieved. Some years later a Ramble Club was formed, but this, too, lapsed after a short season. The Union now caters for its Junior members by the Whakatu Club, which was formed as a direct outcome of our local Easter Camp in 1919. It was mentioned that if the Union had a Club, that Club would be supported by girls who then were members of Clubs of other organisations in the absence of a Club of their own Union's. Whakatu Club was launched in the middle of 1919 with much enthusiasm, about sixty girls becoming members. A Camp was held during the New Year week-end, 1921-1922, at Devonport, and from this Camp members derived much timely help and inspiration. From the outset, the Club has been a success, and has also been a valuable training ground for future office bearers of the Union. The Club programme includes all the necessary elements for all-round development of girls, its activities being based on the four-square ideal of life.

It is significant that from its inception the Union has interested itself in the progress of Woman, and the conditions under which she works and lives. At the second meeting of the Union the subject "The Conditions of Women, Past and Present" was chosen for discussion, the study being led by Miss Cowley and Miss Harvey, a Junior Leader and the present Auckland secretary of the British and Foreign Bible Society. In addition to mere discussion of methods of improving conditions under which so many women and girls labour the Union has striven to improve matters by associating itself with any forward movement in the city that aims at educating the public and bringing about reform.

Several members of Auckland Union have from time to time left us for home and foreign mission work. Our first representative on the foreign field



## MAJORITY YEAR

was Sister Alice McNeish, who left to take up work in the Solomon Islands in 1911. After the Convention held in Hamilton in 1917, Sister Edith Lane went out as a deaconess to the Maoris. In 1922 went out Mrs. Gladys Chivers (*née* Blayney) to the newly taken over Solomon Islands district, and later, in 1925 we farewelled Misses Irene Crespin and Beryl Halliday, who, as the wives of Methodist ministers, were also to labour in the Solomons. Soon Nurse Edna White goes out from Auckland to the Helena Goldie Hospital. Interest in Maori work has always been maintained, especially by reason of our association with Sisters Nellie and Nicholls. We are glad that our Union is represented in mission work, in the Solomons especially, but the harvest is still plenty and labourers yet few.

The Union has made many experiments regarding the most suitable time and place to hold regular meetings, and after many trials the second Tuesday of the month was adopted as the most suitable time for the meeting, and this night was Union night for many years. In 1924 a scheme for simplifying the working of the Union was mooted. For some time it had been felt that the Union was in danger of becoming over-organised, and as a way out of the difficulty the idea was conceived of forming city and suburban groups, each complete in itself, having its own president, secretary, and executive, and holding a meeting wherever possible on the second Tuesday in the month.

Representation on the central Executive is now from Groups, not from individual Classes, thus reducing a rather unwieldy Executive into a more workable meeting. To inaugurate the Group System, socials were arranged for each band of classes that it was proposed to form into a Group, giving the members of classes some idea of what the Group System meant, its working, and suggestions for programmes. The system was not actually launched until after Easter, 1925, and it is yet too early to say that it is or is not a successful scheme. The Groups are certainly touching far more girls in their meetings than was ever possible in the old days of monthly meetings at Pitt Street, and for this reason, if for no other, we can commend the Group System to the favourable consideration of other Unions who feel that they, too, are outgrowing themselves.

A great feature in the growth of the Union has been the Conventions and Camps held from time to time. The first New Zealand Convention was held at Wellington in 1906, with no Auckland delegates present, and the fourth met in Auckland in 1909. After having had experience of a Convention right in our midst, there was no need to urge folk to attend future Conventions, and by the time the 1913 Convention was held, in Wanganui, fifty Auckland representatives were ready and willing to attend. The first Dominion Camp was held in 1918 at Sumner, Christchurch, and five Auckland people were present. However, the following Easter, the first Auckland Camp was held at Mt. Roskill, and this was attended by sixty odd girls, and proved highly successful. 1920 was Dominion Camp year, a large number of Bible Class girls and leaders travelling to Camp at Wanganui. In 1921 a Special Dominion Camp was held in Auckland for the purpose of co-operation with the Young Men's Union for our mutual benefit, 200 campers arriving from all corners of New Zealand. In 1922 the usual biennial Dominion Camp was held in Dunedin, when our Union was well represented, and where the Travelling Secretary



## SOUVENIR BOOKLET

made her first appearance. Then at Easter, 1923, Auckland Union combined with the newly-formed South Auckland Union, and Camp was held at Hamilton High School. It was attended by very large numbers, and the programme was good and well carried out, but it was strongly felt that more Camps with smaller numbers were preferable to one large gathering. Pukekohe District High School was an excellent site for the next year, and again a very successful Camp was held. It had an unfortunate ending, however, for on the day of breaking Camp a strike occurred on the railways, and 1924 is made memorable by the fact that a char-a-banc had to be chartered from Auckland to convey campers back to "home sweet home"; but this naturally appeared more in the light of an entertainment rather than a solid reminder of a strike. 1925 being Dominion Camp year, no local Camp was arranged, but owing to the restrictions of the Health Department following on the outbreak of infantile paralysis in New Zealand, the former lapsed. A junior Northern Camp was arranged for Whangarei during the New Year week-end in 1925-1926, the Travelling Secretary, Miss Lynn, being its organising Secretary. Here again, owing to the prevalence of influenza, the Health Department's restrictions barred many of the juniors who otherwise would have attended Camp. In spite of this, those from Auckland who were able to attend felt that another strong link had been forged in the chain that bound some of our Northern classes to the Union. Easter, 1926, saw us camped at Manurewa School. The accommodation here was not as good as we had been accustomed to, and here again numbers almost overwhelmed us, but even so, we feel that good came out of this Camp. We are now in the midst of preparations for Camps for this Majority Year of our Movement. Two will be held at Wesley College, Paerata, and one at Dargaville, and we sincerely hope and pray that much good may result from each of these.

The Union has always endeavoured to be of practical assistance to leaders of classes, a Circle for Bible Class Leaders being commenced in 1923; but this lapsed after a short course owing to the fact that most leaders were business people who could not attend a day circle, and a convenient evening could not be arranged. However, there is in Auckland an Interdenominational Bible Class Council, and the Union has representation on this. Each year the Council runs a Training Course for leaders, covering ground that is most useful to those able to attend. Besides the usual Bible Study subjects, the course embraces such topics as adolescent psychology, ways of approach to the different types of girls found in an ordinary Bible Class, story telling, and the art of teaching physical drill and organised games.

We as a Methodist Bible Class Union endeavour to live not entirely to ourselves, but it is many years since we had a visit from any Union, the last being from the Baptist Union, though we do meet the Presbyterians yearly, through our Whakatu Club. Each year a challenge is issued to or from the Presbyterian Puritea Club, either to a basket-ball match or to a debate, or something in which both Clubs are interested; and on being present on these occasions one wonders why Church Union seems to be beset with so many difficulties. However, we trust that some day we will be able to arrange combined gatherings of all Bible Class Unions in our city.



## MAJORITY YEAR

Our own Leadership Training Course was commenced last year, 1926, and has been entered upon with much enthusiasm. Classes on Church History and The Life of Christ were held, and those who were privileged to partake in the studies with Rev. A. B. Chappell, M.A., speak very highly of the interesting hours spent with him. We are pleased to be able to report that definite arrangements have been made with Mr. Chappell to act as tutor for the coming year, and we hope that all who can will avail themselves of the opportunity of joining such an excellent course as this year's promises to be.

With the advent of the Travelling Secretary for the Movement, the work of the local travelling agents was accomplished, for to the Movement Secretary fell the joy of touring the countryside in search of any Bible Class that might possibly be linked up to our Union.

The pioneer Travelling Secretary was Miss Delight M. Lynn, B.A., whose visits to our Auckland Union were much looked forward to, and very much appreciated. Miss Lynn did her work well and truly, and spared herself not at all in the accomplishing of it. We are truly grateful to her for the unremitting care and thought always put into her work. In our present Travelling Secretary, Miss Lorna M. Hodder, we have a worthy successor to a very worthy pioneer, and the prayers and good wishes of our Union will ever be uttered on her behalf.

We could not close our records for these twenty-one years without reference to some of our members who have given us of their best in the past, and who now are still intensely interested in the Union. Particularly would we mention Mrs. Armitage, now the Matron of Wesley Home, Mt. Albert, one of the Methodist Orphanages in Auckland, who for six consecutive years acted as Union President. The Union owes more than it can ever repay Mrs. Armitage, who, with sunny smile and cheery, practical optimism, contributed largely to the welfare of the Union, and still, in spite of her large family, is keenly interested in our activities. To Miss Cunningham, still a valued member of the Executive, Miss Harvey, one time Secretary and then President, Miss Gunson, Miss Winstone, Miss Booth, also Secretary and then President, to all these, and to the countless others who have worked for the Union and ever looked onward and upward, we tender our grateful thanks, and trust that always before us who carry on will be our motto, "The Utmost for the Highest."

A. SCOTT.

---

List to the lark!  
He soars and sings,  
Wake to your work,  
The Matin rings!  
Praise God for work!

Noontide is near,  
The board is spread;  
Thanks be to Him  
Who giveth bread!  
Praise God for bread!

Sinks to his sleep  
The pilgrim Sun,  
Homeward to rest,  
The day is done!  
Praise God for rest!

(A. R. Ledoux).



## After Word

---

Twenty years ago, in the *Outlook*, the Rev. A. B. Chappell, M.A., wrote that the opening years of this century would furnish important facts for future compilers of Church History; and that one of these would be the quest of the youth of the Church for "life more abundant" in its own fashion—in Bible Classes, Unions, and Camps not apart from, but parallel with the life of the Church. We have traced in preceding pages the history of that quest which has brought us to the verge of our womanhood as a Movement. We have built up a large organisation with many efficiently headed departments, we have grown in numbers, and extended our ramifications to the farthest corners of the Dominion; we are proud of our camps and conferences, our membership, our Travelling Secretaryship, our modernity; but in this our Majority year we are impelled to stop and consider our spiritual progress.

One thing we have learned, as so many before us, that though our organisation may evolve towards perfection, we ourselves do not evolve towards goodness. The girl of to-day is as religious as her predecessors; she has thrown overboard many tags of formalism which she considered hampered her; she thinks much more independently; she is intelligent enough to question so-called Christian leaders who have shepherded the world into the ghastly muddle of to-day; she is capable of understanding that suspicion, and fear, generally based on ignorance, are the causes of most of our national and international illnesses at present; she turns clear and questioning eye on those about her, weighs, and finds them wanting; and overboard goes her reverence for her elders, as such!

All this seems to be clear gain, *if*—and it is a big IF—she can be caught up with that other tendency of the age, viz., to go back to the fountain head of knowledge and spiritual understanding. Those of us who read the better type of magazine must rejoice at the number of deep-thinking contributors who are pre-occupied with the solutions Christ offered of perennial problems. Scholarly men everywhere are putting aside all the mould and dust collected during the centuries, and studying afresh, in the light of present day psychology and knowledge of the East, the mind and spirit of the Founder of Christianity. One clause in the aim of our Movement is: "to explore Christ's teachings," and the desire of every awakened leader is that that exploration may be as thorough as possible, and that the light shed by thinking minds in the big world beyond us may guide our path.

"For one person who thinks, 1000 feel," says the Bishop of Durham, "and clear heads are needed more than warm hearts at this juncture." We are in want of new basic principles on which to rebuild the structure of our social and industrial life. No thinking person is satisfied with existing conditions; but what the change is to be, and how it is to come about are subjects which should be occupying the mind of every Bible Class boy and girl.

One thing at least is clear, that, in the words of Fosdick "creative character comes from the deep fountains of spiritual life; and the greatest service one can do for others is to minister to the spiritual sources of life;



## MAJORITY YEAR

inwardly to change their minds, to make great faiths real, and great ideals convincing; to establish for them vital contacts with the spiritual world; to bring them into transforming fellowship with Jesus Christ."

This was the purpose with which our Movement started out; this has guided us during the twenty-one years of our existence; and we can ask nothing better for the future than that our girls, transformed and constrained by the love of Christ, should fit themselves by careful study, to work in home, shop, office—wherever they may be—for a new order of humanity, where suspicion, ignorance, and bitterness shall give place to love, helpfulness, and mutual service; and that they may so order their own lives that no failure will dishearten, no rebuff discourage, but that each shall prove a source of new strength and the germ of a greater contribution to the sum of human progress.

May our Movement spread more and more as the years speed by the contagion of that triumphant spirit which is never afraid to tackle any problem it may meet!

"The dawn is not distant,  
Nor is the night starless.  
Love is eternal!  
God is still God, and  
His faith shall not fail us.  
Christ is eternal!"



